Country: Spain

Committee: LEGAL

Topic:

Legality of euthanasia

Our history of legalizing euthanasia:

In 1984 the Spanish federation Derecho a Morir Dignamente (Right to Die with Dignity) was founded under the name Association Right to Die with dignity - DMD.

In 1986, the General Health Law approved that year allowed patients to refuse treatment requesting voluntary discharge.

In 2002, Law 41/2002 Regulating Patient Autonomy and Rights and Obligations Regarding Health Information and Documentation (called the Patient Autonomy Law) reaffirmed the autonomy of patients, allowing them to individually reject a treatment without demanding any justification for it, known as passive euthanasia.

In October 2006, Inmaculada Echevarría, who had suffered from progressive muscular dystrophy for 22 years, asked to avail herself of the law but the religious hospital in Granada where she was admitted refused to sedate her or disconnect her from the respirator that allowed her to stay alive.

In early 2007 the suicide of Madeleine Z., who suffered from ALS and who had sought the advice her at the time of her suicide, and the journalist who reported the case, were investigated, but the case was dismissed.

In 2009, Dr. Marcos Ariel Hourmann was the first doctor convicted because of euthanasia. He was sentenced to one year in prison for administering intravenous potassium chloride, ending the life and suffering of an 82-year-old woman who expressly requested her death due to her irreversible pain.

On December 17, 2020, the XIV legislature of the Congress of Deputies approved a bill to regulate the right to active euthanasia.

On 18 March 2021 Spain has passed a law to legalize euthanasia, becoming the fourth country in Europe to allow people to end their own life in some circumstances. Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Canada, and Colombia are the only other countries in which euthanasia is currently legal. Lawmakers from the Spanish parliament's lower house passed the law, with 202 votes in favor, 141 against, and two abstentions.

The Spanish law permits two voluntary means of allowing a person to end their own life: euthanasia and assisted suicide. Euthanasia is the act of intentionally ending a life to relieve suffering - for example a lethal injection administered by a doctor. In cases of assisted suicide, the act is undertaken by the person themselves with help. The law allows adults with “serious and incurable” diseases that cause “unbearable suffering” to choose to end their lives. The adult must be a Spanish national or legal resident and be “fully aware and conscious” when they make the request, which has to be submitted twice in writing, 15 days apart. A doctor can reject the request if the requirements have not been met. It must be approved by a second medic and by an evaluation body. Any medic can withdraw on grounds of "conscience" from taking part in the procedure.

We wish every country could legalize euthanasia and relief our people from suffering. We suggest countries that do not legalize euthanasia, can get assistance from our law or other countries (Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Canada, and Colombia).

References:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia_in_Spain>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56446631>

<https://www.theweek.co.uk/102978/countries-where-euthanasia-is-legal>