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The right to choose – fundamental democratic right

Sadly, The Physicians' Alliance for Total Refusal of Euthanasia satisfies itself with less than optimal intellectual rigour.

First. Lucidly requested physician-assisted dying, essentially an altruistic gesture, has nothing to do with « killing », as recognized in 1982 by the Law Reform Commission (1), especially when considering that « the first duty of the physician is no longer to save life at all costs, but to respect the freedom of choice of his patient » (2). An opinion even shared by some philosopher: « it is not Life that is sacred but the Person » (3).

Second. It is not true, as shown by research, that all suffering can be satisfactorily alleviated (4) hence the recourse to terminal sedation « when palliative care fails » (5). Inducing a coma is not morally equivalent to analgesic palliation, especially when it violates the patient's own values.

Third. The pretensions that there are (in the Benelux) cases of unrequested euthanasia, that the weak and vulnerable persons are at risk or abused, that the patient / physician relationship is negatively affected, that the evaluation commissions are too lenient, have all been flatly proven wrong by credible authors in credible publications as well as by those who went to the Benelux (6,7,8).

Fourth. Philosophers generally agree that physician-assisted dying is morally justified in special circumstances and, with due respect, religious values in a democracy cannot be imposed to one and all (9).

Fifth: The responsibility of the colleges of physicians is to ensure the Quality and Appropriateness of the medical care provided by their members, not to promote the values of any pressure group « Physician-assisted dying, when justified and requested, should be granted » (10) in the name of human solidarity and compassion.

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