

South Australian Voluntary Euthanasia Society Inc.

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To all members of the Legislative Council

A world overview of current assisted dying laws, judicial decisions and parliamentary initiatives.

Dear member,

I forward a list of these for your information and interest:

- Since 1942 physician assisted suicide has been allowed in Switzerland, taking advantage of the law which states that this will be only be prosecuted if it was motivated by self interest.
- Voluntary euthanasia in Japan has been approved by a high court since 1962.
- The Oregon Death with Dignity Act was initially passed in November 1994 and is the first place in the world to allow physician assisted suicide as a clear legal option for the terminally ill
- Colombia's Constitutional Court approved voluntary euthanasia in 1997 but this has not yet been ratified by parliament.
- On the 1st of April 2002 voluntary euthanasia became a legal possibility in the Netherlands, for those who are suffering unbearably with no prospect of improvement
- In Belgium, on May 16th 2002, a law was passed to allow the option of voluntary euthanasia for those who have a hopeless medical condition of constant and unbearable physical or mental pain.
- On September 26th 2002 the Channel Island Guernsey's governing body, the States of Deliberation, voted by a majority of 38 to 17 in favour of an investigation into voluntary euthanasia. Members of the House were told by the Board of Health and the Advisory and Finance Committee that they should not vote in favour of the investigation unless they were in favour of changing the law.

- Debate is planned for a draft Bill on euthanasia and assisted suicide in the Luxembourg Parliament before the end of this year.

The issue of voluntary euthanasia is one that is being faced by many lawmakers around the world who feel that policy to allow this choice is a compassionate and rational response to unbearable suffering.

Yours sincerely,

Frances Coombe
President