



Annual report 2023

Dear members of the association lifecircle

The first year under the new SAMS guidelines has already passed. I would like to emphasize once again that these guidelines have absolutely no restrictive influence on our association members. We continue to work in compliance with Swiss law and observe the SAMS guidelines in certain respects, but not in all respects. This is for the following reasons:

The Federal Supreme Court has issued a definitive acquittal in the case against Dr Pierre Beck. This Swiss doctor accompanied an 86-year-old woman to her death, whereupon the public prosecutor's office charged him with intentional homicide, as it assumed that the woman was healthy, and that Dr Beck had breached the SAMS guidelines and thus the medical duty of care by accompanying a healthy person. The cantonal court also definitively acquitted me in the case of a woman who was wrongly declared depressed and incapable of judgement by an expert (forensic psychiatry) appointed by the public prosecutor's office after she had been accompanied to her own death. These two court cases show that the severely restrictive SAMS/FMH association guidelines are not applicable law.

In this context, I would like to say that I have the greatest respect for any person over 80 who says they are healthy. Are they really? They bear the ailments of old age with dignity and bravery and try to stay fit instead of complaining. Her eyesight and hearing are deteriorating, her joints hurt or have been replaced. The ability to think also declines, which can lead to embarrassing situations time and again. Nevertheless, these senior citizens say "I'm healthy", I say "very sprightly considering their advanced age". And at the end of the day, everyone must be able to decide for themselves when they have lived long enough. They are allowed to decide on their lives regardless of their illness, as confirmed by the two acquittals.

More and more often I receive a desperate call from people who have reached the end of their lives. They are usually so seriously ill with cancer that the doctors have told them that they must prepare to die, that no more treatment is possible. These people then discover that they are not a member of any assisted dying organisation and that they are therefore not eligible for assisted suicide. Exit currently has a waiting period of 90 days for new members before an application for an assisted suicide can be made. In such cases, I have started to organize an assisted suicide together with the family doctor or oncologist treating the patient without being a member of an organisation. Legally, any doctor can organize and lead an AS without an AS organisation. The doctors are not aware of this. I have now trained seven doctors on the conditions and legal standards under which an AS may be organized. This means that these seven doctors have accompanied one of their patients to suicide under my guidance. In all cases, the accompaniment went smoothly. I am convinced that GPs can and should learn that a wish for AS may be respected and that it does not require an organisation to implement it, but only a well-instructed doctor. Am I on the right track? It would be nice if we could discuss this together at the AGM.

The lifecircle association will be organizing another panel event on 2 October this year, this time with the title: "*Dying peacefully at home - many people do not fulfil this wish. How can this be changed? Finding the way between palliative medicine, end-of-life fasting and assisted suicide*".



We have been able to secure the renowned doctor and specialist in end-of-life fasting Dr Albert Wettstein and the highly experienced palliative care specialist Verena Gantenbein for the panel. It will take place at 18.00 in the Hotel Hofmatt in Münchenstein. Guests who are not members of lifecircle are also cordially invited. You can find the invitation on our website.

I reported on France last year. President Macron now actually seems to be authorizing a law that allows assisted suicide in France too. I look forward to the time when foreigners will no longer have to travel to Switzerland to die in a self-determined way.

England and Ireland still have a lot of work to do. I am pleased that the congress of the global euthanasia organisations <https://wfrtds.org> will be held in Dublin in September this year. I will also be travelling there to try to help ensure that all people ultimately have the right to die in their home country as they wish.

Once again, I invite you to visit our "Café Goodbye", which takes place every three months on a Sunday morning at 10 a.m. in the Reinach Museum of Local History. You can find information on upcoming topics on the website: <https://www.cafegoodbye.ch/> .

In 2023, the lifecircle association did not donate any funds to other charitable organisations, as we are now using the money to reduce the costs of those members who wish to undergo assisted suicide. This year, that amounted to over CHF 110,000.

I would now like to address another matter: the previous Vice President, Rosmarie Zipfel, has resigned from her position as she is on holiday a lot and is therefore unable to participate in the life of the association. We are looking for someone who is willing to take over the position of Vice President. This means attending three to four Board meetings and supporting me in planning panel discussions. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Board members, in particular Yvonne Mischler for her conscientious minutes, Christian Wessendorf for his expert support in all IT matters, Annemarie Herzog for her active support in planning and organizing this year's and last year's panel event, and our lawyer Moritz Gall, to whom I owe my acquittal. I would also like to express my thanks to Esther Stoll (not on the Board), who and Christian Wessendorf do a great deal of work organizing Café Goodbye on a voluntary basis.

Attention! Our AGM will take place again this year in the BEZ in Biel-Benken, see invitation.

Now I wish you all good luck and good health,

With kind regards

Dr. Erika Preisig  
General practitioner and  
President of the "lifecircle" association