
Newsletter December 2024

Dear members

The year 2024 will soon be coming to an end, it has been a quiet year in terms of our work. Since we stopped accepting new members, we only have had one or two AVD's per month. This year there were 16 in total, 6 of which were Swiss citizens. This has significantly reduced the work load of our secretary and her assisting with the AVD's, as well as for our consulting doctors. Our long-standing secretary Jenni Keel has left our organization and moved to Pegasos Swiss Association. We wish Jenni good luck and wonderful encounters as she continues to help people to die peacefully. We are very pleased to welcome Andrea Jossi as our new secretary. Andrea will take care of all your concerns and has already assisted with AVD's, this is a great relief for me. Many thanks to Andrea for supporting us actively and working overtime. So, everything is on the right track at lifecircle.

The panel discussion "*Dying peacefully at home - many people do not fulfil this wish. How can this be changed? Finding the way between palliative care, fasting to die and assisted suicide*" was attended by 200 people. Unfortunately, we had a problem when recording the discussion. Both the sound and the picture were of such poor quality that it was impossible to put them on the website - you simply can't understand anything. It was a shame, because the event was extremely interesting, and some very important questions were asked.

The discussion in November at the Catholic Women's Association in Basel on the subject of "*I want to understand dying as part of my life*" was also very well attended. Here too, the discussion was lively, the topic was emotionally moving and broadened our horizons.

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 BL local history museum. You can find information on all upcoming topics on the website: <https://www.cafegoodbye.ch/>

The World Congress in Dublin once again led to an enormously informative exchange between many countries around the world. It is so nice to see how small progress is being made again and again. At the moment, England is very close to legalizing AVD. In France, the parliament is also taking up this issue again. I hope that a more stable political condition will emerge in France, so this important issue for all of us can be discussed again. The World Congress takes place every two years, in 2026 it will be in Tokyo. This will be important for all of Asia. Because in Asia the acceptance of AVD and the Living Will are virtually non-existent. Here is the website, you can find information about the World Association, including which countries have already legalized AVD: <https://wfrtds.org>

You will no doubt have read about the other events concerning 'Sarco'. I sincerely hope and will do my best to ensure that this unfavorable method does not restrict our liberal situation in Switzerland. The autopsy report on the person who died in 'Sarco' is still outstanding. After 10 weeks, this is a disgrace for forensic medicine, but it will probably have its reasons for this delay. In Dublin I spoke to representatives of the Hemlock Society from the USA. They have been working with nitrogen gas for decades and told me that severe convulsions can occur when dying with nitrogen gas. If I imagine that the person enclosed in the 'Sarco' begins to convulse, then injuries are sure to occur in the tightness of the "capsule". Injuries that forensic medicine at this point cannot understand how they occur. I am so grateful that we are allowed to

use sodium pentobarbital in Switzerland. This ensures an absolutely gentle death. We will never use any other method than sodium pentobarbital. Should the practices of the Sarco operators lead to restrictions in Switzerland, I am sure that the Swiss people will stand up and defend Switzerland's liberal approach. In Switzerland, the referendum always decides in the end.

We now have far too many wheelchairs, which we would like to give away free of charge. Foreigners who come to us for AVD usually leave their wheelchairs to the organization. I met a doctor who runs a small hospital in the Ukraine. Many war-disabled people there need wheelchairs. If no member comes forward, we will pass the wheelchairs on to this doctor. I am happy when people who have died peacefully can bring joy to others once again.

Just a week ago, I had a wonderful experience with a Swiss woman aged 93. Until 7 weeks ago, she lived in her very old chalet without any outside support. Until a fall ruined her health. Broken bones and hypothermia led to a weakening of her heart, so that after leaving hospital she could only live in a nursing home with an oxygen supply and shortness of breath. When I assessed her, she told me that I would give her "the best of her 93 Christmas presents" if she could die peacefully before Christmas. Then she could 'be herself' again, in the afterlife. She died with AVD the way she wished in her old house, assisted by her family doctor, her son and me, incredibly grateful and happy, just as it should be.

Christmas is just around the corner and hopefully the New Year will bring us many wonderful experiences. The lifecircle team wishes you a peaceful Christmas and all the best for the New Year



Erika Preisig
General practitioner and President
of the lifecircle association