



Annual report 2016

Dear members of lifecircle

I am happy to be able to send you today the fourth annual report of the Eternal Spirit Foundation. Many things have happened also in the past year. Unfortunately this concerns only the Eternal Spirit Foundation, within the association lifecircle we had a rather quiet year. As our newly elected president Beatrice Zurbrügg fell very ill, she could not realize the projects she had planned for 2015. So in 2015 there could no events be organised by lifecircle itself. But anyway we were able to participate in two important events, to which also our members were invited.

On 10.10.15 there was a podium discussion to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Hospice in Lörrach Germany. This event was organised by the palliative care specialist Dr. Tilly Nothelfer, who is not only leading the palliative care team in Lörrach, but also the palliative care team in "Klinik Arlesheim" in Switzerland. She invited an oncologist, a palliative care specialist, a German politician and me (as only supporter of assisted dying and palliative care) for this podium discussion about the self-determination at the end of life. After the discussion people could ask questions. Here two auditors told about their destiny and their wish, to have the same right at the end of life as we have in Switzerland. It is very frustrating for the Germans that shortly after this event, on 10.12.15, there was a new German law, which forbids any information about AVD over the border to German members.

On 18.11.15 our member priest Paul Kohler also organised a podium discussion in Pratteln Switzerland, which was not only very interesting, but also very well visited. On this occasion I would like to thank Mr. Kohler, he has done excellent work. Under the title "good dying-sleeping away peacefully-where? –How? – accompanied by whom?" a palliative care doctor, two priests and two main responsible of two local nursing homes and I were on the podium to tell about their experiences with end of life issues and dying. After the discussion there were again lots of questions asked by the auditors.

Beside these two events in the region of Basel we also took part in publications to activate discussions about old age, illness, and help to live and to die in peace. So the theatre „Ibsen Gespenster“ was played for the first time in Zürich in January. In this Theatre young people to the group „Markus und Markus“ are motivating the spectators to reflect about the difference between the unassisted suicide and the assisted voluntary death. One of our members has accepted to take part in the theatre, by having filmed her decision-making and her AVD. There was also a podium discussion in Zurich after the theatre, "dying in the 21th century". After this first edition in Zurich the theatre was played in several countries of Europe.

We also took part in producing a film which a Norwegian film team was doing, and in a film and an English film, which was broadcasted on BBC2 a few weeks ago, "Simon's Joyce".



We took part in a special day where all the Foundations met in the Zoo of Basel, and I was invited to talk about our work with lifecircle and Eternal Spirit on doctor's conferences in Switzerland. So you can see, we are doing a lot of work concerning the legalisation work. And this is not only abroad, but also in Switzerland. I am not only disappointed, but also shocked, how **badly** the AVD is accepted in Switzerland (by doctors and authorities, not by the population). For example, the evangelic labour party (EVP) asked for investigations against lifecircle and Eternal Spirit again in 2015, after they had already done this in 2013. Their demand to open a case against me was rejected in 2013 by the medical association of BL and by the health department. This time they accused us that we were making money by giving people the opportunity for AVD. The prosecutor asked our treasurer to hand in all books, and they found out that there was no reason to accuse us for making money with assisted dying. You find the report of the prosecutor on the website, but I am sorry, it's in German only.

One more accusation of the EVP towards me as president of the Foundation dealt with the restrictions of the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMW) which forbid AVD in cases with non terminal diseases. Terminal means that death will occur most probably within days or weeks. In this case the board of honour of the medical association BL decided that I did not interfere with Swiss law accepting AVD also in non terminal cases, accepting illnesses as MS, ALS, dementia and tetraplegia etc. (non-terminal illnesses).

I am very glad that the medical association of BL even has put up a demand towards the SAMW to change the regulations for AVD and to make them correspond with the wish of the Swiss population. Only the medical association of BS (City) has not closed the case against me. There will always be resistance by religious groups, authorities and doctors against the right to die in peace and self-determination in case of incurable illness. We commit ourselves to the wish of our members no matter what happens.

There is one further problem with the authorities of BS (City): there is not only the still open case against me, but they have also decided to forbid us to do AVD in the apartment in Basel. This is for the complaint of three people who say that knowing that once a week someone is dying in their neighbourhood makes them have psychological problems. The fact that all hospices are within the living area and that in a hospice quite some people die much harder than with us, seems not to be of interest within local residents or authorities. In fact, the authorities have decided, that AVD can only be performed and accepted in an industrial zone. This means that we are back in the medieval times, where people who have committed suicide were not allowed to be buried within the city. We will have to accept that we are pushed out of the living area into the industrial area to have peace-performing AVD.

We only have one big wish: to finally work in peace. We hope that we can start our work this month in the new place. Even in the industrial zone there were two complaints, but now everything seems to be on a good way.

Good news: I can repeat here what I have written last year: The amount of members has increased again last year. There are also some new lifetime members, what pleases us especially, as this shows how much our members trust our organisation, that we will be working as reliable



for many years. We thank our members and we will do our best for them in case of severe illness or handicap.

Our organisation has supported financially "SEOP", a nursing organisation for palliative care at home, and "Insieme", a day centre for handicapped people in Basel. Now we have supported also nursing for children at home, and sports for handicapped.

Furthermore we can offer electric wheel chairs to our members, as well as walking aids and other tools for handicapped. Should someone need something, please ask our secretary Corinne Bohn (info@lifecircle.ch).

We like to recommend the book "father you are allowed to die" written by Frau Dr. Erika Preisig. It can be ordered on the website only.

Outlook for 2016:

Our project "Himmelried" is on its way to become an "oasis" where our members can spend their last days before their AVD despite a bad illness. But it will need some more time and money until our first member can find peace there. We thank you for every donation onto the account "Himmelried".

We would love to activate our work within the association lifecircle to regain quality of life. Unfortunately last year we did not succeed in this, as our new president Beatrice Zurbrügg has not been able to work for lifecircle for health reasons. Because of relapsing misunderstandings between Mrs Zurbrügg and board members of the association and the Foundation, Mrs. Zurbrügg has resigned her work for the Foundation. She would be willing to go on working as president for the association and she has not resigned as president yet. Though in the meantime it is clear that Beatrice Zurbrügg and I are having too many misunderstandings to go on working together within the association. The board of the association has discussed the matter very much in detail and has asked Beatrice Zurbrügg to resign for the general assembly 2016. I am willing to take over as president again until we have found a new person who can really help me.

Concerning the presidency of the association it is fact that this work is financially recompensed only in case of expenses, but must be done unsalaried. Events of lifecircle should be organised, Newsletters should be written and Ideas for spending the money of the association according to the statutes should be found, for palliative medicine, alternative living despite handicap, suicide prevention and so on. Should one of our members feel enabled to do this work, then we can discuss this during the general assembly.

Kind regards

Mrs Dr. med. Erika Preisig, association lifecircle / Eternal Spirit Foundation