



## **Annual Report 2020**

Dear lifecircle members

Much has happened since my last newsletter, and it's time for another annual report.

The global spread of the coronavirus Covid 19 had a significant impact on 2020. Our association acquired some Swiss members, almost certainly to make provisions in case the disease took a severe course. Covid brought death closer, and humanity was reminded of how quickly everything can change. Many foreign members were unable to travel to Switzerland because of travel restrictions and died in their home country, sometimes in appalling circumstances. Last year we monitored only 54 voluntary assisted deaths (VAD), of whom 11 were Swiss.

Apart from the General Assembly we were unable to organise any events in 2020 because of coronavirus restrictions. We even had to postpone the dates for Café Goodbye. Unfortunately the next Café Goodbye scheduled for 30.5.21 cannot take place either for the same annoying reason. Discussions aren't feasible when everyone is 1.5 metres apart, and catered socialising is also forbidden. So the organising team decided to move the event on therapy dogs to the next one on 29 August 21. You can find information about our Café Goodbye, held at the local museum in Reinach, on the website: <https://www.cafegoodbye.ch/> ,

Early in 2020 it became clear that the ideal property in Flüh could not be purchased. Three Flüh residents jointly hired a lawyer and took their appeal against our plan to the Canton. Flüh's local authority had basically given us permission to set up a bed-and-breakfast in the big old house at the edge of the village, and also to monitor VADs, with the aim of later establishing a home for the elderly when foreigners no longer need to come to us for a VAD. Taking an objection to the next level can quickly lead to a year's delay, and the owner of the house had a buyer who wanted the house immediately. So it was understandable that the owner preferred the other offer. It was wonderful that two homeowners in nearby villages contacted us as a result of this turn of events and offered us other properties. However the fight for a permit would have started all over again and both properties were in the residential and agricultural zone. It would have become difficult and I did not have the energy to campaign for another property the way I did for the house in Flüh. We are actually quite comfortable in Oristal and the communal residence for the elderly can certainly be established later without a room for VADs.

As the Flüh project cannot be implemented, a vote must be taken to decide whether donations to this and the Himmelried project, which also cannot be carried out, are to be used for palliative care and alternative living arrangements. Donors who would like to have their money refunded are kindly requested to let us know and to provide their bank account details by 09/06/21.

Last year was also notable for me in that I was waiting for the court hearing at the Cantonal Court. This took place recently and resulted in confirmation of the initial acquittal. Furthermore, the judges decided that I had not violated my duty of care, and they reduced the fine of 20,000 to 10,000 as well as the court and procedural costs and legal fees from 100% to 5%. This great success is the achievement of our lawyer, Moritz Gall, helped by my presentation of the situation before the Cantonal Court. A small fly in the ointment remains since the pharmacist who, together with the cantonal pharmacist, advised me on how to handle the lethal drug sodium pentobarbital, escaped with a fine of 200.- while I have been saddled with one of 25,000. I cannot follow the thinking behind that. Taking the matter to the Federal Court, however, represents such a heavy burden that I believe it is better to lose 25,000 than to damage my health still further. We must now wait for the written



judgement, which may take 2-3 months. When this is available, we shall decide whether to appeal to the Federal Court.

From now on I will certainly continue to campaign for more communal living in Switzerland, self-determination at the end of life and to convince more doctors and psychiatrists to respect the desire of people to determine how their own lives should end.

We are happy that the opportunity for VAD became available in Germany, even if for the time being it is only under very specific conditions, but at least it is offered by three different organizations. Austria and Spain have also legalised VAD and are working on a law and guidelines for its implementation. This is important for lifecircle because the more countries legalise VAD, the fewer people from abroad must travel to Switzerland and the more time we at the lifecircle association have to improve our members' quality of life.

The housing cooperative Chreemer Kari in Biel-Benken has asked whether the interest-free loans of 50,000 could be extended for three more years. There will be a vote on this at the AGM.

As part of lifecircle association's promoting quality of life, it has donated a total of CHF 5000.- to: ELA Switzerland, Schweizerische Muskelgesellschaft (Swiss Muscle Society), Alzheimer Research Switzerland, Insieme Basel (disability support), Stiftung Autismzentrum Aesch Foundation (Aesch Autism Centre/Foundation), PluSport Schweiz (disabled sports), Alzheimer Schweiz, Kinderspitex Nordwestschweiz (children's hospital), IVB Basel (disabled transport), Netzwerk Demenz beider Basel (dementia network), Sehbehindertenhilfe Basel (visually impaired) and the Verein ALS Schweiz (Swiss ALS Society). The recipients have expressed their great appreciation to the association; the accountant will report further.

**Important! This year our GM is not taking place in Therwil but in Biel-Benken, see invitation.**

Now my wish for all of us is that we will soon have mastered this Corona situation and may meet and hug each other again.

With kind regards

Dr med. Erika Preisig  
President of the lifecircle association