



Annual report 2022

Dear lifecircle Members

Some important changes occurred during 2022. Definitely the two most important are the new guidelines of the SAMW, which came into force in May 2022, as well as my decision not to add any new members to our association.

First the new guidelines: the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences, SAMW, is an advisory body of the Swiss Medical Association, FMH. Their guidelines are a professional code of conduct, not applicable Swiss law. However, since these guidelines are repeatedly used in court decisions, doctors expose themselves to danger if they do not respect them. In 2018 the SAMW issued new guidelines regarding the "end of life", which fully corresponded to the internal requirements of the Eternal Spirit Foundation, and which we have been following since it was established. Unfortunately the FMH rejected these guidelines and in 2022 significantly more restrictive guidelines came into force. I expressed my opinion of this in a letter to readers (<https://saez.ch/article/doi/saez.2022.20767>) and (<https://saez.ch/article/doi/saez.2022.20903>) in the Swiss medical journal. An article I also submitted to this journal was unfortunately rejected.

The new guidelines do not have a restricting effect on our members as I have never experienced a completely healthy person wanting to die. Above all they affect the very elderly who suffer from various "minor" age-related problems. The prosecutor's office declares these people "healthy", although they have been bravely bearing all their suffering for years. It is important for us to be aware that in such situations the sum of these "non-terminal age-related ailments" can make life unbearable, so that the desire to die may be respected.

Towards the end of this year we will be organising a panel discussion on the subject of "old-age deliverance" to address this issue. You will receive the invitation in due course.

Last year in May I decided to reduce my workload massively. This is only feasible by achieving what I had imagined as possible when lifecircle was established. At that time, I planned to work towards the legalisation of VAD worldwide until my retirement. I have been doing this with all my energy for 12 years. During this intense time I over-extended myself too often and unfortunately the court proceedings, which have been ongoing for seven years, have also put great strain on me, leaving me no other choice. My health, which has suffered greatly, particularly from the trial, induced me to end lifecircle. I would like to emphasise here that lifecircle will continue to assist anyone who joined before 1.11.22. However, no new members will be admitted. This is difficult because many desperately ill people seeking help turn to us. I am grateful that we have other organisations in Switzerland which help these people to die self-determined, safely and pain-free.

With the decision not to accept any more new members, the association's board has decided to make a further change. The money, which has flowed into the association through membership fees and donations, is intended to financially support those members who find themselves in a situation because of illness that makes them want to apply for a VAD. Their costs will be reduced, that is, lifecircle association will partially subsidise the costs of a VAD, depending on the duration of the membership. This byelaw, which has been in force since 1.1.23, was passed at an extraordinary general meeting. The Board's proposal was endorsed by the members present. At this year's General Assembly we will once again inform everyone about this new regulation and we also have to confirm the amendment to the articles of association that was adopted then. The members who have so far been able to make use of the new regulation were extremely grateful for the reduction in costs.



Regarding my still impending court date, there is no news. We are all "patiently" waiting for the Federal Supreme Court to set a date. On the other hand, Dr Pierre Beck (I reported on the case in the last annual report), was acquitted by the Cantonal Court of Geneva in February 23. However, the Prosecutor's Office of Geneva did not accept this and has yet again moved the proceedings to the Federal Court. So, like me, Dr Beck still has to go through a federal court case. Since the Beck case, like my own, is a violation of the Narcotics Act and of medical due diligence, my case will probably not be taken up until the Beck case is closed. For me, this means more gruelling waiting.

However, I can also tell you something incredibly gratifying. On 8.12.22 the Arthur Koestler Prize was awarded in Berlin and the DGHS (German Society for Humane Dying) selected me as the recipient. I was therefore invited to Berlin for the award ceremony. This expression of gratitude for my tireless efforts in assisted dying, is for me the most beautiful thing I have ever been able to experience. It is a hugely significant recognition, just a few days after we closed down lifecircle. I am currently writing a thank-you speech to the DGHS, who would like to publish a special edition of their journal on the occasion of this award ceremony. I will provide you with the link in one of the next newsletters.

And a second very pleasing situation is that the legalisation of VAD in France was discussed in public consultation, with meetings every two weeks over three months. In conclusion Emanuel Macron has realised that the people clearly want the possibility of VAD or euthanasia in France, too. A law to this effect needs to be drafted within this year. Let us hope that soon no French person will have to use our services in Switzerland but will be permitted to be helped to die in their home country!

In March 22, shortly after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, I travelled with Markus Lüthi to Warsaw to speak at a human rights congress about the right to control over one's own death. This experience, so close to the events of the war, made a deep impression.

It is also worth mentioning the congress of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies, which took place in Toronto last year, <https://wfrtds.org> . It was almost embarrassing to hear that Canada, a country that legalised VAD only 6 years ago, has achieved significantly better acceptance and respect for patients' wishes than Switzerland, where the oldest assisted suicide organisation, exit, is now 40 years old.

Once again, I invite you to visit our "Café Goodbye", which takes place every three months at the Heimatmuseum Reinach. You can find information about upcoming topics on the website: <https://www.cafegoodbye.ch/> .

Continuing the association's work promoting quality of life, lifecircle donated a total of CHF 7.500 to the following institutions and projects: ELA Schweiz, Stiftung Autismuszentrum, PlusSport, Stiftung Kinderspital Wildermeth, Behindertensport Schweiz, Schweizerische Muskelgesellschaft, Kinderspitex Nordwestschweiz, IVB Behindertentransport Basel, Sehbehindertenhilfe Basel, Verein ALS Schweiz, Stiftung "Zuckerpuppa". The recipients have expressed their great appreciation to the association; the accountant will report further.

Please note! Our AGM is taking place in the BEZ community centre in Biel-Benken, see invitation.

Now I wish everyone good luck and tolerable health,



With kind regards

Dr med. Erika Preisig
President of the lifecircle association