

Annual report 2024

Dear members of the association

Last year, we were once again able to help some of our members to have their dignified last farewell surrounded by their family members. And in many cases of a death wish, we were able to find a solution through counselling and care that improved the quality of life again, so that the death wish receded into the background. Such experiences make me very happy, as I see life as a gift that can be given back, but should not be given back too soon. The number of our assisted voluntary deaths (AVD) has decreased significantly since we stopped accepting new members, which I see as a relief. Last year we accompanied 16 members making use of AVD.

However, as I wrote in last year's annual report, we continue to receive many desperate enquiries from people who are seriously ill and do not belong to an AS organisation. Just a few days ago, Swiss television broadcasted a programme comparing the situation in Switzerland with that in the Netherlands (programme SRF "Puls" on 19.5.25). Here is the link:

<https://www.srf.ch/play/tv/puls/video/sterben-auf-rezept---wie-weiter-mit-exit-und-co-?urn=urn:srf:video:971f16cf-6841-48c2-9799-459a1d9432b4>

I wish Swiss doctors would take more responsibility, which they have not only towards people who want to live, but also towards those who want to die. However, I also understand that doctors do not want to expose themselves to the risk of prosecution by the public prosecutor's office, nor do they want to justify themselves to the police after the AVD. It will take a lot of time and patience before anything changes here in Switzerland.

In the last newsletter, I mentioned that we might not be organizing a panel event this year. Fortunately, Irene Stiefel has now agreed to support me with this planning. As a result, the lifecircle association will once again be holding an event on Wednesday 12 November at 6.00 pm at the Hotel Hofmatt in Münchenstein. This time we don't want experts to speak, but people who are affected, who want an AVD or one of their family member had an AVD. The last event in October 24 was very well attended with over 150 interested people who took part in the lively discussion. I hope that we will again be able to involve people in our deliberations at this event. Guests who are not members of lifecircle are also cordially invited. We will publish the invitation on our website.

In September 24, Mr Lüthi and I were invited to attend the congress of the worldwide euthanasia organisations <https://wfrtds.org> in Dublin. The exchange was very pleasing; all the organisations (there are currently 64 worldwide) are making small but significant progress in legalisation work in their home countries. The fact is that every country has different regulations, some very restrictive, some highly liberal. In Austria, the person has to go through a highly complicated series of clarifications, but then receives the can of lethal powder to take home and uses it whenever and however they want. This worries me because it is not clear what happens to all the doses if the person concerned dies naturally, and how many doses are taken in a moment of depression, and not in a well-considered manner. Well then, the important thing is that countries legalize and that death tourism to Switzerland decreases.

Our 'Café Goodbye', which takes place every three months on a Sunday morning at 10 a.m. in the Reinach Local History Museum, was attended by a changing number of people last year. We would be delighted if more people, including non-members, would come to Reinach. At the next event, on 22 June, we will fill in a living will together, as we did last August, and provide information on advance directives, wills and bank powers of attorney. Everything is extremely important, as fate can strike unexpectedly at any time, and you can only make your own decisions after losing your capacity of judgement, if you have taken precautions with these documents. You can find information on upcoming topics on the website: <https://www.cafegoodbye.ch/>.

In 2024, the lifecircle association only made a small donation of CHF 525 to "hilft mir auf die Beine" as we have been using the funds since 2022 to reduce the costs of those members who are fated to need assisted dying. These cost reductions were in total CHF 51,800 this year.

As our Board member Annemarie Herzog passed away last year, I asked for help on the Board in the last newsletter and was lucky enough to find what I was looking for. Irene Stiefel, a long-standing member of lifecircle, has agreed to help on the Board. Irene will introduce herself at the AGM and I hope that we will be able to elect her to the board.

Attention! Our AGM will take place again this year at the BEZ in Biel-Benken, see invitation. Unfortunately, we cannot offer translations, the AGM will only be held in German.

Now I wish everyone good luck and sustainable health, be as interested in new things and as radiant as this delegation from Korea (picture below), who wanted to learn from me how an AVD is practised in Switzerland.

With kind regards

Dr Erika Preisig, MD
President of the 'lifecircle' association

