



## **Annual report 2025**

Dear members of the association

Over the past year, our membership has continued to decline, as we have not accepted any new members since November 2022. I am particularly pleased when members from abroad cancel their membership because they can now access assisted voluntary death (AVD) in their home countries. This applies to many countries, particularly Germany and Austria, but also Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., and certain countries in South America. If you are interested in seeing in which countries around the world AVD has now been legalized, please visit the World Federation's website at <https://wfrtds.org>, where you will find all the information.

Eighteen of our members sought our assistance last year to end their lives on their own terms with AVD. Last year, however, I also had the privilege of caring for a ninety-year-old woman during her fasting to die. She suffered from various age-related ailments and decided to die by refusing food. She was so frail that she could no longer live alone in her bright, beautiful apartment. She categorically refused to move into a nursing home. I organized a family meeting with her son and daughter, who understood their mother's wish and arranged everything as I advised them. After 11 days of fasting, the elderly lady passed away peacefully. I had asked her why she preferred the death fasting before AVD. She replied that she wanted to give her body time to prepare for death. I don't know if the body can or must prepare for death; I think it will always resist dying. Rather, the mind would have to prepare itself for it—which it is certainly possible in the case of AVD. Well, we'll never know. What has always been important to me is that every person be allowed to end their life as they wish. And if possible, not in an intensive care unit, but surrounded by the loving care of their children, just as this lady of such strong character was.

The panel discussion held last November in Münchenstein was once again a resounding success. This time, the topic focused on the relatives of people who wish to undergo AVD. We had written to just over 100 relatives, asking them to share their experiences with a family member's AVD on the panel. That takes an enormous amount of courage, because talking about such a topic in public is emotionally taxing. Of all those contacted, five people responded. I invited all five and was amazed at how openly they spoke about their experiences before, during, and after a family member's AVD. The conclusion was that everyone considered respecting the person's wishes to be difficult but important. Everyone found the period between the announcement of the AVD date and the actual procedure to be extremely stressful. The wish was expressed to keep this period relatively short, but relatives still need time to adjust to the dying person's decision. For me, this panel discussion was the best we have held so far. It is still unclear whether we will be able to organize another panel discussion this year. You will find out in a future newsletter.

Our "Café Goodbye," which took place every three months on a Sunday morning at 10 a.m. at the Reinach Local History Museum, saw record attendance last year. We decided to discontinue this event, partly because Ms. Esther Stoll, who had managed Café Goodbye very professionally for years, wished to step down. We would like to sincerely thank Esther Stoll and Christian Wessendorf for their work and the significant time they dedicated to the museum.



Regarding the board, Irene Stiefel has unfortunately decided not to serve on the board. This is an election year, and the entire board must be re-elected. All five current board members are standing for re-election: Moritz Gall, Markus Lüthi, Yvonne Mischler, Christian Wessendorf, and Erika Preisig.

I wish everyone good luck and good health,

With kind regards

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