

November 2020 Newsletter

Dear Members,

Again, a lot has happened in the last few months; unfortunately, we are enduring a second coronavirus wave. I wish everyone good luck and stay healthy!

Our General Assembly was held in August and I would like to thank our members for coming despite the current corona situation. Unfortunately, yet another lifecircle event has fallen victim to the coronavirus: Café Goodbye, which should have taken place on 15 November, must be postponed until next year. Once again we had chosen an interesting topic: "Therapy dogs, the role of animals in illness and death." I can truly recommend this talk, which is expected to be rescheduled for March 2021.

Our project in Flüh has definitely collapsed. We are still convinced that we would have received permission from the Solothurn canton authorities and regret that we could not continue to fight for its acceptance. Unfortunately, the owner of the property has accepted another buyer's offer because he could no longer wait for us. What pleased me greatly was the fact that we were then offered two more properties for sale, one in Rodersdorf, and one in Holderbank SO. Unfortunately, at the moment, I have neither the courage nor the perseverance to engage yet again in a fight against only a few, but very determined, opponents of voluntary assisted death. We would still have to submit applications for these locations and the effort and expense of Flüh was enormous. So we are enjoying tranquillity in Oristal and working on the legalisation, so that we will soon no longer need that apartment for foreigners. The residential community project for disabled or terminally ill people has in no way been forgotten, it will just take longer.

The Rundschau magazine programme on Swiss television in late September had a very pleasing report. Their portrait of me and my work helping people at the end of their lives was very well balanced. A link to the appropriate section of the Rundschau is on our website (German only).

Another television appearance is supposed to take place on 23 November. Swiss, German and Austrian channels, SFR/ARD/ORF, are broadcasting the play "Gott" (God) by Ferdinand von Schirach simultaneously at 20.00 CET. It will be followed on the Swiss channel by "Club-Spezial" with a live group discussion of the question "who owns my life?" The discussion will cover the play, voluntary death in old age and self-determination even without serious illness. I have been invited by "Club-Spezial" in Zurich to join the discussion that evening and will hopefully do our campaign justice. It would be great if our members would also express their opinions by phoning in.

There is still no major news on my trial. The ball is being thrown back and forth between the prosecutor and my lawyer. We are certainly not expecting a date for the proceedings in the cantonal court until next year. The only clear matter is that the prosecution is appealing against my acquittal of the main charge, as my attorney is doing against the secondary one. Unfortunately, there is nothing else to do but be patient.



Even my fellow sufferer, Dr. Pierre Beck, has made no progress in his very similar lawsuit. The date for his federal court case has still not been announced. So they all have to wait, too. For your amusement, here's a photo of Pierre Beck and me after his cantonal court proceedings in Geneva: a problem shared is a problem halved, this also applies to the dessert!

There is news about my work as a family doctor: a doctor has asked me whether she can take over my practice. She lives in a village nearby and wants to take over a practice as close as possible to where she lives. These days it is rare to be lucky enough to find a successor so, after much heartfelt consideration, I have decided to hand over my practice to her. It is really too soon for me as I need all the support I can get from my patients during the trial. How often have they shown their support at exactly the right moment by bringing me a bunch of flowers or some chocolates when the press overdid it again with negative headlines. I will miss this personal support. I will greatly miss the sense of achievement when my patients recovered from a crisis, which offset my work with incurable disease and death. On the other hand, I'm looking forward to having more time for the lifecircle association. I will be offering my services to the Executive Board of the European organisation "Right to die Europe" to enable me to become more involved in the legalisation of VAD in Europe.

And if anyone reads in the press that I was elected to the church administration (despite my work helping people to die), it is true. I am enormously pleased that the Biel-Benken parish has confidence in me to help restore peace in my home town from within the parish council. This, too, is a very important task for which I will have time once I have handed over my practice.

So carry on, no matter what: chin up, we'll manage it together!

Kind regards,

Erika Preisig, General Practitioner and
President of the lifecircle association