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## February 2022 Newsletter

Dear Members,

The new year has begun and maybe we are heading towards better times as far as Covid is concerned. I hope that 2022 will be a good year for all of us.

First of all I would like to give you some good news. I have been invited to the first meeting of a Swiss parliamentary group, newly established in December 2021, which is committed to respecting living wills and the right to self-determination. It was set up by a national councillor who experienced illness and suffering in her own family and, as a result of these experiences, wants to work with six other parliamentarians in this area. I consider it an honour to be able to take part in the first meeting and an indication that our work is appreciated. Who knows whether our rally in Bern maybe helped a little here, too? Once again, many thanks to everyone who made the effort to travel to Bern! The meeting will take place on 2nd March; I will report on it in a future newsletter.

Further, regarding this parliamentary group, it is interesting to know that a lot is happening relating to living wills throughout Europe. EUMANS <https://www.eumans.eu>, is an Italian group led by Luca Coscioni <https://www.associazionelucacoscioni.it> which has scheduled a Congress in Warsaw for 11th/12th March. They will be discussing an internationally recognised living will, which should be valid throughout Europe, possibly even worldwide, stored on a central EUMANS register which can be accessed at any time from anywhere. It is very important that a living will is drafted in a way that is clearly understood and legally valid. An international template, valid and respected in all countries, is desirable. A delegation from lifecircle near Warsaw may take part in this important discussion.

Concerning the board of directors of the European organisation "Right to Die Europe" <https://www.rtde.eu>, European organisations have until now shown little or no interest in working together. It is pointless for lifecircle to continue its efforts here, so I have decided, despite active help from a member from England, not to do anything until a meeting takes place in Bergen in May 22 when a reorganisation may be possible.

At this point I would like to apologise to everyone who went in vain to Bern in January to attend the panel discussion between the theologian Wirth and myself on "tandem generations". Unfortunately this was cancelled the day before because of Covid fears. We are of course very sorry that we were only able to inform our members by email and that some of them did not find out in time. The event will now take place on 26th April, see the attached flyer. Likewise in April, on Tuesday 12th, a panel discussion will take place in the Elisabethen Church in Basel. I will be discussing the topic of self-determination at the end of life with a theologian there, too. I look forward to critical participants at these events. I am very pleased that theologians are willing to engage in dialogue on this delicate subject.

I have not yet received a court date for the Federal Supreme Court. After all, it has "only" been nine months since the proceedings before the cantonal court. However, on 9th December 2021, I appeared before the Federal Supreme Court in Lausanne in a different matter, namely regarding the first and second appeals of the conviction of Dr. Pierre Beck for violating the medical duty of care in connection with an assisted suicide. It was very interesting to attend the proceedings. Two judges read countless paragraphs and argued for a conviction, two were for an acquittal, and the judge then explained how she came to her decision for an acquittal: in Switzerland, assisted suicide is not punishable. If the doctor, Dr Pierre Beck, had taken a revolver instead of the drug pentobarbitone, and handed it to the very elderly person with



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instructions on how to shoot in order to ensure death, he could not have been prosecuted at all. Yet that would have facilitated a painful and uncertain death. But when he prescribes pentobarbitone, he enables a 100% painless, certain death. The opinion of the presiding judge was that a person cannot be punished for the better solution if the worse one would go unpunished. Therefore, the doctor had to be acquitted. But she also said something extremely interesting: the guidelines of the Swiss medical association, SAMS, contain restrictions about which the Swiss people were neither informed nor consulted. They do not correspond to Swiss legislation and should not be considered in this supreme court decision. These are statements that also give me confidence for my upcoming session in the Federal Supreme Court.

The next date for our Café Goodbye, which takes place on four Sunday mornings a year, is on **20th March at 10.00** at the Reinach local history museum (Heimatmuseum). We have chosen another interesting topic: "Do I know what I want?" I will give the lecture on this topic myself; we look forward to a lively exchange over coffee and croissants (as far as Covid allows). <https://www.cafegoodbye.ch>

We will endeavour to organise lifecircle association podium events once again this year. The last event, with the topic "Dignity", was very interesting although, unfortunately, Pastor Werner Kriesi could not join the podium discussion, again because of Covid. I apologize to those who attended for not being able to see Pastor Kriesi; we will try to invite him again this year.

Our General Assembly will take place on ..., unfortunately only in German. Please save this date if you can attend.

This link is interesting for French speakers, 19.2.: <http://www.admd.be/laide-medicale-a-mourir-et-le-suicide-assiste/>

This link is interesting for English speakers, 22.2.: <https://www.publicpolicyexchange.co.uk/event.php?eventUID=MB15%e2%80%93PPE&ss=em&tg=1a>

With kind regards, and wishing you all the best from the bottom of my heart,

Erika Preisig, General Practitioner and  
President of the lifecircle association