



---

Newsletter August 2022

Dear Members,

So far we have had an exciting general meeting and a hot summer. Time passes quickly and I would like to tell you what has happened since my last newsletter.

There I mentioned the parliamentary group led by national councillor Doris Fiala, which intends to campaign towards more self-determination at the end of life. The group's first meeting was very interesting but it was only concerned with the standardisation of an advance directive for health care. The international association EUMANS is committed to the same goal, but Europe-wide, in addition to its activity in Switzerland. In March I travelled to the Warsaw Congress with our accountant Markus Lüthi. Since we were travelling in the direction of Ukraine, that is to say to the war, we took the car rather than fly, to be able to turn around at any time if the war expanded. It was spooky, Warsaw full of police, but otherwise quiet. I was astonished that the congress was held despite the war in Ukraine. One day was devoted to Ukraine, and several people from there, who had been directly affected, described the situation. The second day was dedicated to human rights, to self-determination generally and specifically towards the end of life. In addition to the international advance directive and the right to refuse therapy, artificial insemination, abortion and euthanasia were also discussed. I had the opportunity to provide up-to-date information on the situation of the advance directive in Switzerland. The international standardization of the advance directive is a very desirable goal, as is the need for attending physicians worldwide respect it. Both groups are taking a step in the right direction.

The Swiss association "und" made a recording of the discussion between a fairly young pastor and me in Bern for their "tandem generations" series, which you can find on our website or here: <https://www.generationentandem.ch/online/radio/sterbehilfe/> and there was a second discussion between a more elderly pastor and me in the Elisabethen church in Basel. Both were very interesting, but very different, probably because of the different attitudes of the two pastors, one rather liberal, one rather conservative.

This year lifecircle association will again organize a panel discussion on 1st September at 18.00 in the Hoffmatt Room of the Hotel Hofmatt in Münchenstein, please see the included flyer. After what promises to be a very interesting speech by Heinz Rüegger, Dr Eva Birkenstock and I will join him on stage to discuss the topic "*Self-determined dying in today's healthcare system - between freedom and imposition*". Once again, questions from the audience will be answered in the third part. I urge you to attend this free event and actively participate. You can even book a room and stay overnight at the Hotel Hofmatt. Unfortunately, however, we cannot offer interpretation into English or French; the discussion will only be in German.

We have been waiting for a Federal Supreme Court date for 16 months now and have not heard anything yet. Perhaps the court is awaiting the conclusion of the case against Dr Pierre Beck, about which I reported in the last newsletter. If so, it will take a long time, since in that case the cantonal court has not yet made a further ruling.

Verein lifecircle  
Fichtlirain 16  
4105 Biel-Benken BL  
Switzerland [www.lifecircle.ch](http://www.lifecircle.ch) [mail@lifecircle.ch](mailto:mail@lifecircle.ch)



Unfortunately, on 19.5.22 the FMH (Swiss Medical Association) adopted new SAMW (Swiss Academy of Medical Science) guidelines. Sadly these are significantly more restrictive than those of 2018. What I regret most about these new guidelines is that they state that "the autonomy of doctors" is at risk (if the 2018 guidelines were to apply). But I wonder whether the FMH is familiar with the new Adult Protection Law introduced in 2013. It states that all doctors must respect advance directives and the autonomy of the patient must be the first priority, even in the event of mental incapacity. But when someone wants to die, is it the doctor who may decide that the patient's suffering is "serious enough" so that he or she may die, i.e. the patient's wish to die may be granted? This is an encroachment on patients' rights we cannot just accept. The autonomy of every patient with mental capacity ranks higher than a physician's autonomy; that is my conviction and my ethic. Every doctor must be allowed to, but not have to, respect a patient's desire for deliverance. No doctor should be forced to issue a prescription for a lethal drug, but it is wrong to make the patient's autonomy secondary to the doctor's own autonomy, i.e. principles. In Canada the rule is that if a doctor, for whatever reason, does not wish to discuss the patient's desire for deliverance, s/he is obliged to refer the patient to another doctor who has a neutral attitude towards self-determination at the end of life. Why can't the FMH adopt this rule? If you would like to know more about my activities and opinions, please visit Regio-TV Plus, where I gave an interview regarding the new SAMW guidelines:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlcRtmFbM-Q>

Our Café Goodbye, which takes place on four Sunday mornings a year, will next be held on **28th August at 10.00** o'clock in the Reinach local history museum "Heimatmuseum Reinach". We have chosen another interesting topic: "Advance Directives in the era of Covid and Pandemics" I shall personally be speaking on this subject; we're looking forward to a lively exchange with coffee and croissants (as far as Covid allows). <https://www.cafegoodbye.ch>

Another piece of information for our English-speaking members: I have been friends for years with an assisted deliverance activist in England. Alex Pandolfo was a teacher until he became ill with Alzheimer's dementia. He has not been able to practise his profession as a teacher for some time, but in his native England he is 100% committed to the legalisation of VAD in England.

Alex's father had Alzheimer's, and I'll never forget what Alex said to me three years ago: "*Until my father was totally demented, he suffered and we suffered less. After that, however, he no longer suffered, but we, his family, suffered all the more. The suffering I endured during my father's illness, I will not inflict on myself or my family. I am a member of lifecircle so I can be allowed to die when I lose my personality. Until then, I will do everything possible to ensure that I do not have to die in Switzerland, but that VAD can occur in my native country, England*". I urge you to watch an updated, highly informative documentary that Alex Pandolfo has created in his quest to achieve the legalisation of VAD in his home country.

<https://vimeo.com/733251718>

Now I wish everyone a good summer, and maybe we shall meet on 1.9.22 at the panel discussion, or at Café Goodbye on 28.8.

With kind regards and my sincerest good wishes,

Erika Preisig, General Practitioner and  
President of the lifecircle association

Verein lifecircle  
Fichtlirain 16  
4105 Biel-Benken BL  
Switzerland [www.lifecircle.ch](http://www.lifecircle.ch) [mail@lifecircle.ch](mailto:mail@lifecircle.ch)