

International Task Force

on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

Holland's Euthanasia Law

On April 10, 2001, a Dutch law permitting both euthanasia and assisted suicide was approved. That law which went to effect on April 1, 2002, is summarized below:

Due Care is required

- Requires that the physician "has terminated a life or assisted suicide with due care." [Chapter II, Article 2, 1,f.] This requirement – that the **procedure be carried out in a medically appropriate fashion** – transforms the crimes of euthanasia and assisted suicide into medical treatments.
- Specifically allows euthanasia for incompetent patients. **Persons 16 years old and older** can make an advance "**written statement containing a request for termination of life**" which the physician may carry out. [Chapter II, Article 2, 2.] The written statement need not be made in conjunction with any particular medical condition. It could be a written statement made years before, based upon views that may have changed. The physician could administer euthanasia based on the prior written statement.
- **Teenagers 16 to 18 years old** may request and receive euthanasia or assisted suicide. **A parent or guardian must "have been involved in decision process," but need not agree or approve.** [Chapter II, Article 2, 3]
- **Children 12 to 16 years old** may request and receive euthanasia or assisted suicide. **A parent or guardian must "agree with the termination of life or the assisted suicide."** [Chapter II, Article 2, 4]
- A person may qualify for euthanasia or assisted suicide if the doctor "**holds the conviction that the patient's suffering is lasting and unbearable.**" [Chapter II, Article 2, 1b] There is no requirement that the suffering be physical or that the the patient be terminally ill.

Oversight is by non-judicial committees

All oversight of euthanasia and assisted suicide will be done by a "Regional Review Committee for Termination of Life on Request and Assisted Suicide" **after the death of the patient.** [Chapter III]

- Each regional committee will be made up of at least 1 legal specialist, 1 physician and 1 expert on ethical or philosophical issues. [Chapter III, Article 3, 2]
- An expert in "philosophical issues" is one who has expertise regarding the "discussion on the prerequisites for a meaningful life." [Chapter III. Article 3. 2.