

Euthanasia and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

31 December 2000

EHF strongly protested in a press release after the publication by the Council of Europe of a declaration regarding euthanasia:

Mrs E. Gatterer (Austria, EPP/CD), Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Rapporteur on euthanasia, has declared in a press release that the law on euthanasia adopted by the Dutch Parliament is contrary to the European Human Rights Convention.

Article 2 of this international convention states that “no one shall be deprived of his life intentionally”.

Mrs. Gatterer infers that “a terminally ill or dying person’s wish to die can never constitute a legal justification to death” and has urged the Dutch Senate not to adopt the law on euthanasia. Such misinterpretation is particularly offensive and excessive as, for the sake of the “right to life”, she takes no account of the will of the person, terminally ill or dying.

The right to life is transformed into an obligation to live, even in a situation of great suffering.

The European Humanist Federation (EHF – FHE) is indignant that Mrs. Gatterer goes beyond her competence by setting up as a dogmatic moral authority and by deciding for other persons, which affects their dignity.

EHF – FHE and European humanists defend the right to “a dignified death”.

They have to be taught no lesson on Human Rights by a representative of a European party to which belong the friends of Jörg Haider.

EHF – FHE urges the European democrats and members of Parliament to put an end to such attempts at exerting undue influence.