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Press release by

DIGNITAS – To live with dignity – To die with dignity

7th Report on Quality Control of DIGNITAS' Services in Relation to Accompanied Suicide published

Detailed report shows professional work of DIGNITAS

DIGNITAS – To live with dignity – To die with dignity was founded in May 1998. Since mid-2005, the organisation has been collecting feedback about all accompanied suicides and commissioning written analysis of this. In this way, DIGNITAS creates transparency for its employees, members and other interested persons and institutions with regard to what actually happens during an accompanied suicide. The organisation has just published its 7th report, which covers the time period from August 2012 to December 2014.

Purpose of the Report

In a number of countries, obtaining information about accompanied suicide and assisted dying in general is very difficult. For example, political trends in recent years in our neighbouring country, Germany, clearly show that politically conservative forces do not want people to be able to form their own opinion about their quality of life and the end of their life, and to take action accordingly. It is very important for us to counter this degrading and inhumane situation by making first-hand information available to citizens of all countries.

Important Questions

What happens when someone contacts DIGNITAS? How quickly can an accompanied suicide be prepared? What happens on the day itself? What is it like for family members and other people present on that day? And what is it like for them afterwards? The staff attending an accompanied suicide record their experiences in a questionnaire immediately after the accompaniment has taken place. Family and friends who support members of our association on their journey to an accompanied suicide also have the opportunity to report their feelings and impressions to DIGNITAS. 739 feedbacks from staff attending an accompanied suicide and 251 feedbacks from family members over a period of 29 months have been analysed. Both constructive criticism and praise are welcome and published in the report.

Strengthening of Suicide prevention and Suicide Attempt Prevention

Once again, attention has to be drawn to the still enormous number of desperate suicide attempts: It is still little known that up to 49 out of every 50 suicide attempts fail⁽¹⁾, causing great suffering to those directly or indirectly involved and incurring high healthcare and economic costs for society⁽²⁾. This is why DIGNITAS will continue to advocate for effective measures to be drawn up and imple-

mented, with the aim of preventing suicide attempts. The detailed, open-ended advisory concept by DIGNITAS is a gold standard that should be widely adopted.

Freedom of Choice, Self-Determination and Responsibility

Fully in the spirit of the right of every human to decide on the time and manner of their own end in life, DIGNITAS gives people who choose an accompanied suicide the greatest possible freedom in arranging this important moment, which is something they much appreciate. The feedback makes it clear how important it is for family members and friends to be involved at an early stage in the decision-making concerning an accompanied suicide. The sooner they can get used to the idea, the more likely they are to be able to accept the decision. The 7th Report on Quality Control confirms DIGNITAS' highly professional work standards and modus operandi.

The report can be downloaded from the DIGNITAS website, using the following link or QR code.



<http://bit.ly/2qmSqRA>

⁽¹⁾ see reply of the Swiss Federal Council to the Ordinary Question 01.1105 regarding suicide and suicide attempts: <http://bit.ly/2ICBmsi>, in German

⁽²⁾ see the study „Der Preis der Verzweiflung – Über die Kostenfolgen des Suizidgeschehens in der Schweiz“ („The Price of Desperation – On the cost of suicide and suicide attempts in Switzerland“): <http://bit.ly/2ldsugd>, in German

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BACKGROUND:

DIGNITAS – To live with dignity – To die with dignity was founded in May 1998 with the aim to make the proven Swiss model of freedom of choice, self-determination and personal responsibility in life and at life's end also accessible for individuals abroad.

DIGNITAS' advisory concept – combining palliative care, suicide attempt prevention, advance directives/decisions and assisted dying – offers a basis for good decision-making to shape life until the end.

Through litigation, DIGNITAS obtained a judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in 2011, acknowledging the right/freedom of a competent individual to decide on time and manner of his or her own end in life, and confirming this to be protected by Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

DIGNITAS has been engaged in many more lawsuits in Europe and Canada, and has provided in-depth submissions and received visits by expert and parliamentary committees from Great Britain, Australia, Canada, etc. when laws were discussed and planned for the protection of a patient's autonomy and human dignity.

The founder of the charitable DIGNITAS organisation is Ludwig A. Minelli, an attorney-at-law specialising in human rights. The team of DIGNITAS consists of board members, twenty part-time employees and it is supported by several external experts in the fields of medicine and law.