

Background

Created in 2016 by the French Ministry of Health, the National Centre for Palliative Care and End-of-Life (CNSPFV) informs citizens about their rights, publishes statistical reports, and contributes to public debate on end-of-life issues.

Context

In an international landscape marked by growing ethical, medical, and political debates, the question of assisted dying causes contrasting positions. While some countries have regulated this practice through legislation or case law, others still formally prohibit it.

Scan the QR code to download the Overview of legislation on assisted dying around the world (in french):



Purpose

To make information accessible to patients, professionals, citizens and policy makers, in the context of the legislative debate currently underway in France.

Aim of the project

To provide an up-to-date overview of legal frameworks on assisted dying worldwide, highlighting: the diversity of regulatory approaches associated ethical, medical, and societal issues.

COUNTRIES WHERE ASSISTED DYING HAS BEEN LEGALIZED (JUNE 2025)

In USA, assisted dying is decriminalized in 10 states.

In Australia, assisted dying is still prohibited in the Northern Territory.



■ Assisted suicide and euthanasia decriminalized ■ Assisted suicide decriminalized ■ Assisted suicide and euthanasia authorized by court decision

This overview is organized by country, with the following information provided for each country: a description of the relevant laws, the criteria for accessing assisted dying, and the oversight procedures.

Definition

Euthanasia is the act of deliberately ending a person's life to relieve suffering.

Assisted suicide is the act of deliberately assisting another person to kill herself, by the prescription of a medication.

Assisted dying is an act which ending by the death of a person, on her request.

Each country has its own definition of assisted dying, which varies depending on the local context; therefore, to obtain a clear definition, it's necessary to refer to the legislation of the country in question.

Criteria

Person-related criteria

More than 18 years old
Euthanasia is possible for minors in the Netherlands and Belgium.
Being a citizen or living in the country.
Spain, Austria, Portugal, some states in the USA, Australia and New Zealand.

Capable of discernment

This means being able to decide, understanding what euthanasia or assisted suicide means, and being fully aware of the legal framework and consequences involved.

Clinical situation

Serious and incurable illness, disease (or disability for Canada)
Psychiatric illness falls within the scope of euthanasia in several countries (Belgium, Netherlands,...).
In most cases, death must be foreseeable. The prognosis varies.

Suffering

Suffering can be physical and/or psychological, or not specified.

Process

Validation by at least **two physicians**.
The assessment may include other medical or psychological opinions.

A **written request** is always required
Some countries, such as the Netherlands or Belgium, allow euthanasia based on an advance request.

Non-negotiable waiting periods

Some countries, like Spain, have established predetermined deadlines for each step.

Control procedures

Ex-ante controls: Prior to the procedure, this process ensures that the conditions for accessing assisted dying are in line with criteria set out in the law (Spain, Portugal and Austria).

Ex-post controls: all criteria are checked after the death of the patient. This verification ensures that the professionals have fulfilled their obligations and that the provisions of the document comply with the law.

Conclusion

At a time when France is currently debating the issue of assisted dying, this overview highlights the complexity and heterogeneity of existing models. In other countries, discussion processes are ongoing and not yet fully concluded (Jersey Island or Slovenia for example).

By providing a comparative overview, the French Centre of Palliative Care and End-of-Life provides solid evidence to inform and contribute to national debates on end-of-life care.