

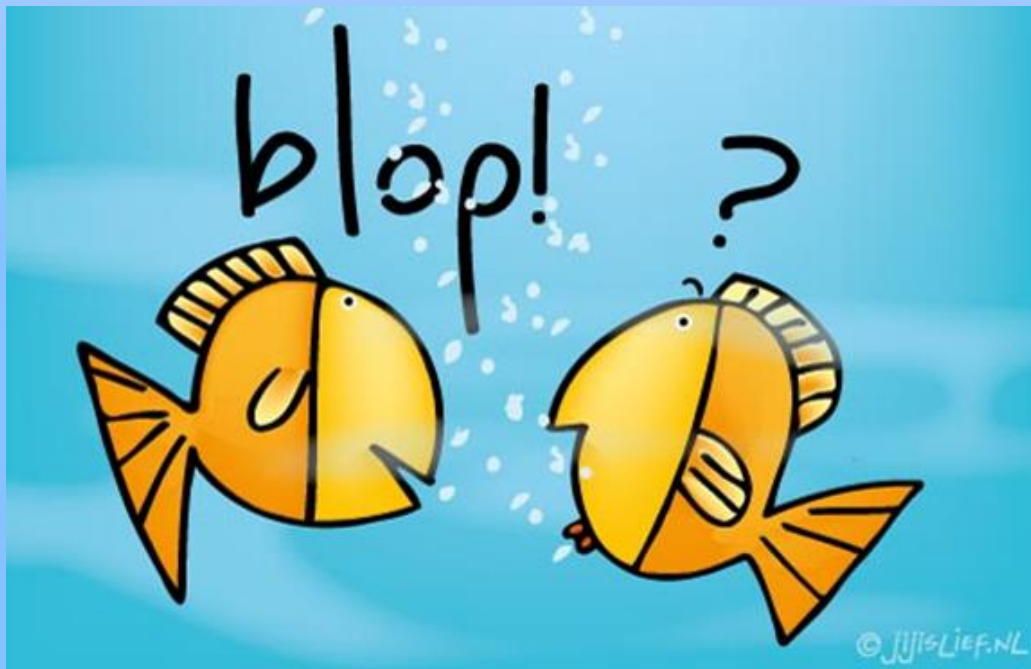
The Dutch Euthanasia Law

good example or signal for danger?

Rob Jonquière, NL

WFRtDS Executive Director

- 1972 – 1985 GP in own practice
- 1985 – 1995 Head of training for GP
- 1999 – 2008 CEO NVVE
- 2008 – today Executive Director WFRtDS



Definition

Euθanasia = good death

- need for prefixes as
 - voluntary, non-voluntary, involuntary
 - active or passive
 - direct or indirect

Definition

Euthanasia

deliberate termination of life by someone else, on the explicit request of the person involved.

Definition

Physician assisted suicide

Termination of life by person concerned (suicide), with the assistance of a physician (prescribing drugs)

Definition

Euthanasia is **NOT**

- terminal or palliative sedation
- non voluntary termination of life
- non treatment decisions

The Law

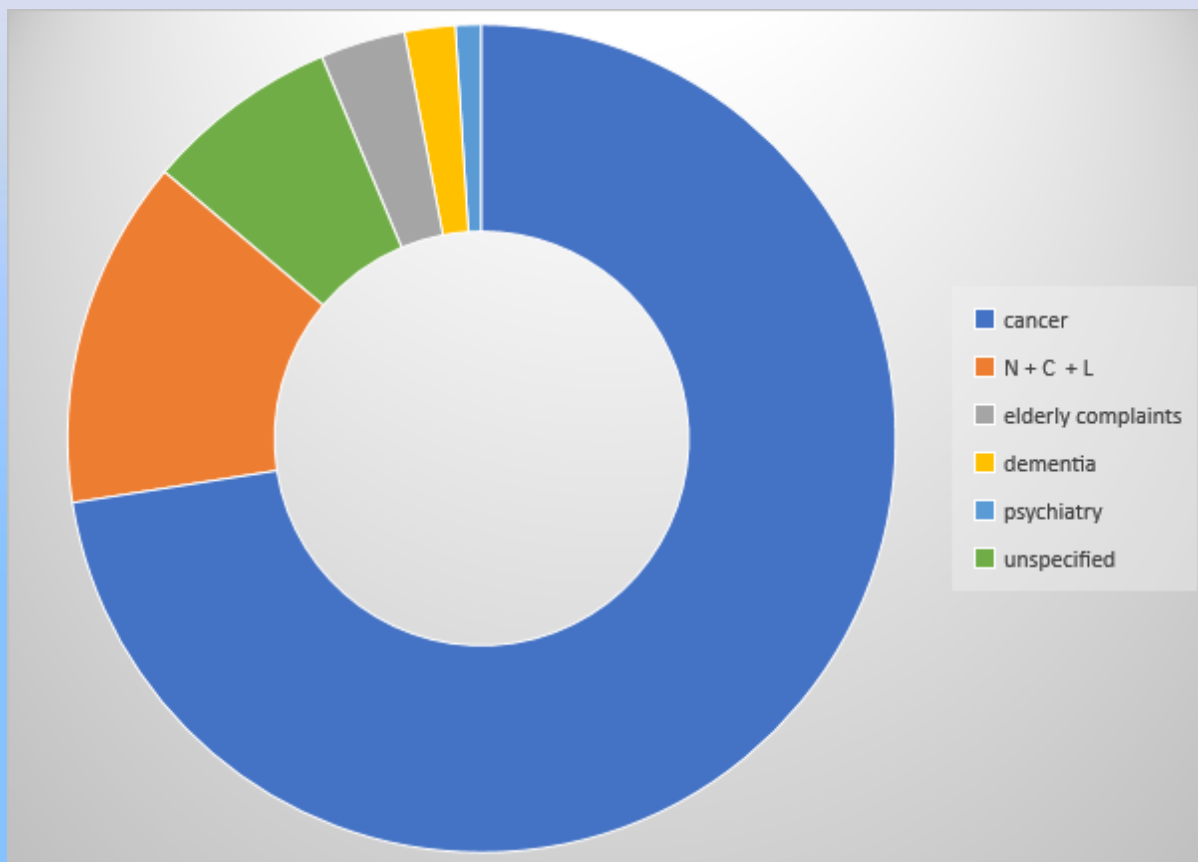
Euthanasia is still a crime, but.....
when a *doctor* acts
and
follows the *criteria*
That doctor is *free of prosecution*

The Criteria

-
- request: voluntary and well considered
- unbearable **and** hopeless suffering
- no available and acceptable alternatives
- obligatory consultation (SCEN)

The Criteria

- good medical practice
- Reporting to Review Committee



Terms & definitions



	1990	1995	2001	2005	2015
Total	128.800	135.700	140.000	136.400	147.134
% euthanasia	1.8	2.4	2.5	1,7	2,9
% PAS	0.3	0.3	0.2	0,1	0,1
% non vol. term.	0.8	0.7	0.7	0,4	0,1

'Misconception'

Old and incapacitated people in The Netherlands are afraid of going to hospitals or nursing homes.

'Facts'

- Review Committee (2015):
 - 4409 *at home*
 - 191 *in hospital*
 - 239 *in elderly/nursing home*
 - 345 *in hospices*

'Misconception'

Legalisation is a danger for the
'vulnerable' (old, [social] weak,
handicapped, poor) people

'Facts'

- International research (NL and Oregon):
 - *white people*
 - *well to do*
 - *highly educated*

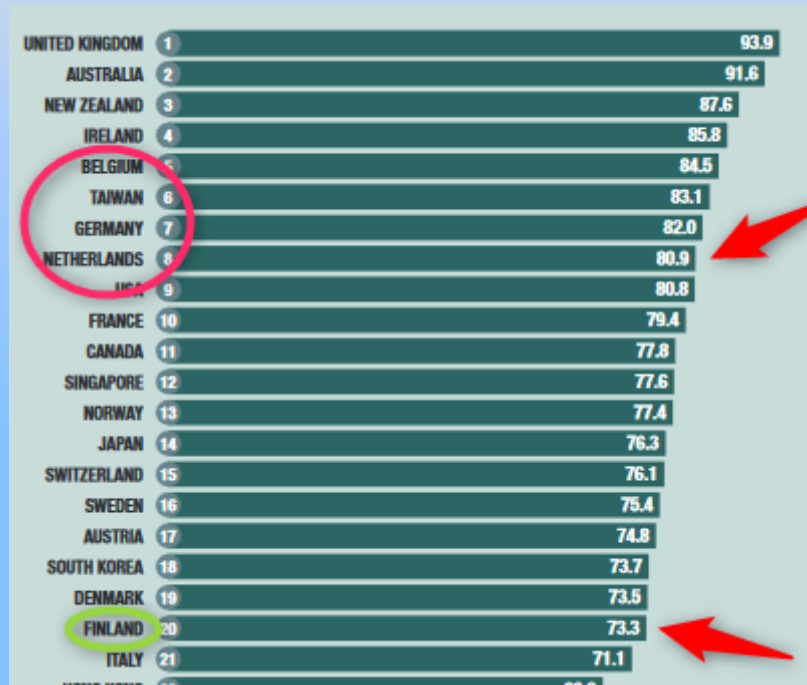
'Misconception'

Optimal Palliative Care makes
euthanasia redundant.

'Facts'

Reasons to ask for euthanasia:

- meaningless suffering 65%
- deterioration 44%
- total weakness 43%
- prevention of deterioration 36%
- dependence 33%
- *pain* 29%
- *suffocation* 23%



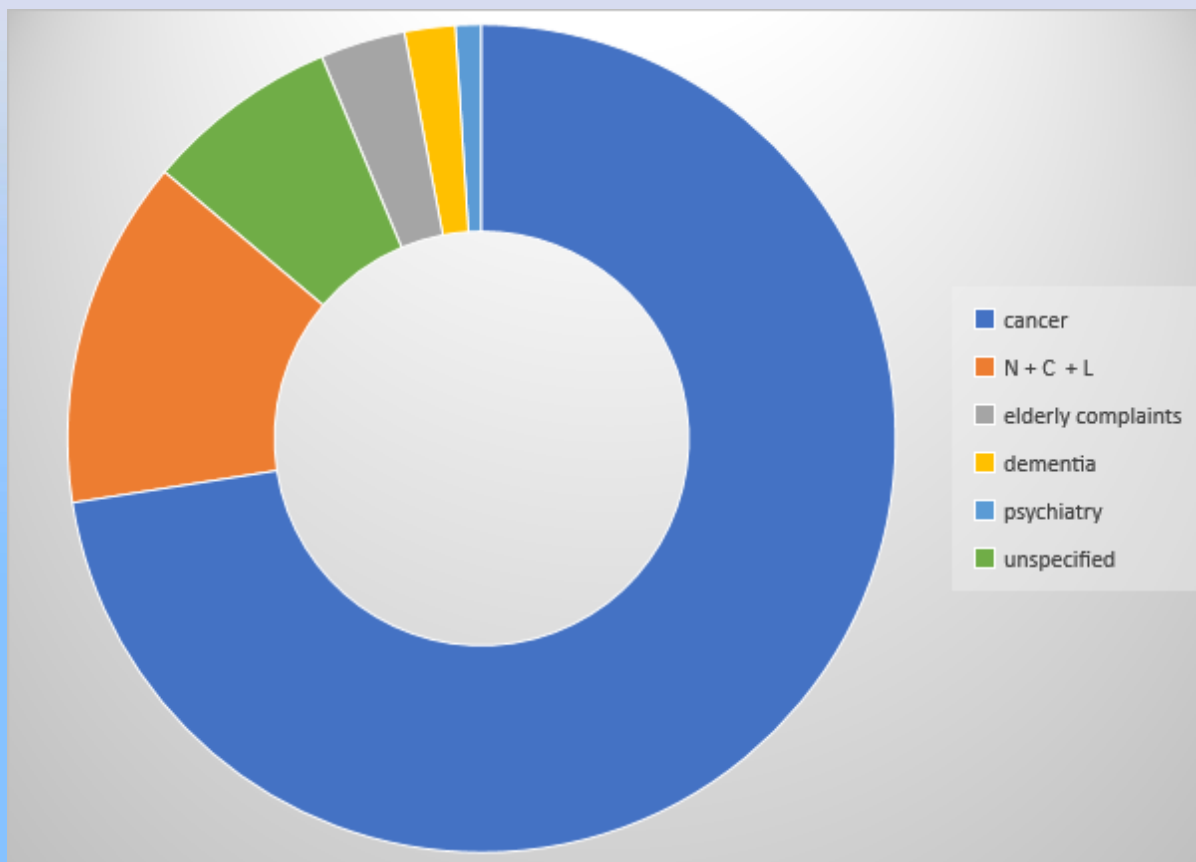
'Misconception'

Once euthanasia is tolerated,
doctors will practice termination of
life outside the regulations (the
slippery slope argument).

'Facts'

Termination of life without request:

- 1990 0,8% (Remmelink)
- 2001 0.7%
- 2002 law
- 2005 0,4%
- 2015 0,1%



> 35 years of Dutch tolerated and legalised medical aid in dying (euthanasia and PAS) practice shows no sign of a slippery slope

'Lesson'

Medical aid in dying should be considered
as an act to end suffering and not
specifically as one to end life

'Lesson'

Availability of medical aid in dying
sometimes prolongs life rather than
shortens it

Q&A

Thank you