



Dear Praying Friends in Europe,

Assisted dying bill launched in the House of Commons (England and Wales)

A bill to legalise assisted dying for terminally ill adults in England and Wales has been formally introduced in the House of Commons. Members of the Parliament (MPs) will have a first debate on the bill, introduced by the Labour MP Kim Leadbeater, on November 29 2024. The MPs can vote according to their individual conscience, not constrained by party restrictions.



The bill proposes one circumstance in which people could be assisted to end their life: terminal illness. The regulations are simple. When someone has full mental capacity and is likely to have less than an arbitrarily chosen six months to live, they can receive assistance to end their life. The causes of their suffering do not need to be explored, nor whether they receive appropriate care and support or not. The only prerequisite is that two doctors certify that the person is acting without external influence and has been informed of the care available.

Opponents warn that using terminal illness to determine eligibility for assisted dying has wide consequences for the society. Once assisted dying is normalised as a healthcare option for terminally ill people, everyone with a severe illness would have to consider it. They would feel pressure to take this option, not to be a burden on others. The bill would also change healthcare. By accepting the wish for assisted suicide, doctors are sending a signal to the patient. They confirm that life is no longer worth living. Doctors should instead encourage seriously ill patients that life is still worth living. The bill also does not discuss in detail how assisted dying could be proposed by doctors. However, the example of Belgium, a country with a long-term legalisation of assisted suicide, shows that some physicians actively propose this option to their terminally ill patients. This is critical, because studies showed that the majority of requests for assisted dying are based on mental suffering, even if there is an underlying physical illness. It all depends on how doctors and nurses deal with the mental suffering. This is why the message of hope from medical staff is so important. Experience with legalised assisted dying in Belgium shows that not all persons who have applied for dying follow this path to the end. By listening to the patient, a foundation is laid by medical staff to improve the health situation, e.g. by medication and psychosocial support. There is a danger that requests for assisted suicide will be prompted by feelings of loneliness and uselessness.

Other European countries are also currently considering allowing people to choose to end their life. In France, President Emmanuel Macron supported a new law in 2024, which would allow assisted dying for those with incurable conditions. If the patient is physically too weak, they would be allowed to get help from a doctor or a nurse. The bill was introduced in April, but the elections in July 2024 interrupted the progress.

In 2020, the Federal Constitutional Court in Germany ruled that assisted suicide is permitted, provided that the decision is made freely and autonomously. However, how this is to be implemented in practice has not yet been regulated by law. In 2023, the Bundestag debated two different legislative proposals, but no agreement was reached.

Prayer points:

- 1. Pray that the attempt to legalise assisted dying in England and Wales will fail.**
- 2. Pray that voices are heard by MPs in the UK that point out the harmful consequences of the proposed bill.**
- 3. Pray for greater financial and political support for palliative care in the UK and other European countries.**

Ukraine

It is now more than 1000 days since Russia started the war in Ukraine. In recent days, there have been some major developments:

- **the election of Donald Trump, who has said he will “stop the war in a week” without saying how;**
- **permission for Ukraine to use long range US and UK missiles into Russian territory;**
- **an increase in the drone and missile attacks by Russia targeting the population and civilian energy infrastructure.**

Let us not grow weary in praying for the people of Ukraine as they face their future with great uncertainty.

Further Prayer:-

1. It is likely that the new EU Commission members will be voted into place after much arguing by political groups. Pray that they can soon begin their work overseeing important areas of policy in the EU.
2. Let us Pray for the Romanian Elections. 1st round of Presidential on November 24, Parliamentary on 1st December and a possible 2nd round Presidential on 8th December.

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