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MCCL GO makes human rights case against Swiss assisted suicide

Contribution to Switzerland review filed with Human Rights Council in Geneva

GENEVA — The practice of assisted suicide in Switzerland is inconsistent with human rights, according to Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life Global Outreach (MCCL GO), an international non-governmental organization working to secure human rights for all human beings. The organization has submitted a written contribution to the U.N. Human Rights Council’s upcoming review of Switzerland.

“Switzerland’s lax regulations allow assisted suicide as long as the assistance is not motivated by selfishness,” says Scott Fischbach, executive director of MCCL GO. “Many people who are not terminally ill receive assisted suicide—including people with depression, dementia and other mental illnesses.”

The number of assisted suicides in Switzerland has increased substantially in recent years. And because there is no requirement that the recipient be a citizen of Switzerland, people from other countries frequently travel there in order to end their lives—a practice called “suicide tourism.”

The Human Rights Council, an inter-governmental U.N. body founded to promote and protect human rights worldwide, conducts a Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of all nations to determine whether they are fulfilling their human rights obligations and commitments. The Council will review Switzerland during the 28th UPR Working Group session this fall.

MCCL GO’s contribution to the review—which is [available online](#)—explains that the facilitation of suicide can prevent patients from receiving the full health care to which they are entitled, including mental health care and palliative care. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights protects “the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.”

Assisted suicide violates the “inherent right to life” of all human beings that is guaranteed under international law. Moreover, the U.N. Human Rights Committee has expressed concern about “the lack of independent or judicial oversight to determine that a person seeking assistance to commit suicide is operating with full free and informed consent.”

Assisted suicide also violates equality and non-discrimination. The right to life applies regardless of age, health and disability. Although the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities protects the right to life of disabled persons “on an equal basis with others,” research has found that Swiss patients generally seek (and are granted) assisted suicide because of concerns about disability and dependency.

“Switzerland has committed to human rights treaties that guarantee the right to life, the right to health, and equality and non-discrimination,” concludes Fischbach. “Yet all of these rights are threatened by the country’s current practice of assisted suicide.”

MCCL GO is the UN- and OAS-accredited global outreach program of the Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life Education Fund. Our goal is to protect as many human beings as possible from the destruction of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia. Learn more at www.mccl-go.org. Please subscribe to our [RSS Feed](#).