

FACTSHEET 25: The World Federation of Right to Die Societies

World Federation of Right To Die Societies, founded in 1980, consists of 37 organisations from 23 countries, each working to secure or protect the individual's right to die with dignity.

Historical background:

Upon formation of the Japan Euthanasia Society (now the Japan Society for Dying with Dignity) in 1976, Dr Tenrei Ota convened an international meeting of existing right-to-die societies. The attending representatives from Japan, Australia, the Netherlands and United Kingdom shared international perspectives on right-to-die issues. A second conference was held in San Francisco in 1978, and, at the third conference held at Oxford in 1980, the World Federation of Right to Die Societies was officially founded.

The Role of the Federation is to:

- Disseminate current information and educational materials about voluntary euthanasia, physician-assisted dying, other right-to-die issues, and related matters of interest;
- Promote co-operation and liaison among member societies;
- Facilitate international conferences on dying and death;
- Provide assistance, where requested, to groups and individuals interested in establishing similar societies in countries where such societies do not currently exist; and
- Respond to requests by interested groups, scholars, and individuals for information about right-to-die issues.

The World Federation of Right To Die Societies meets every two years to exchange news and views, to elect Directors and Officers of the Federation, and to conduct other business. Members share a commonality of purpose even though they represent countries with diverse legislative status. The diversity of socio-political circumstances is therefore not conducive to the federation having a policy-making role. Each member country must pursue policy on end-of-life decision making on an independent basis.

Declarations by Medical Professionals:

At the international conferences held in Melbourne (1996), Zurich (1998), Boston (2000) and Brussels (2002) formal declarations were made by attending medical professionals in support of the goals of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies.

Member Societies:

Australia: Voluntary Euthanasia Societies of New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, West Australia

Belgium: Assoc. pour le Droit de Mourir dans la Dignite

Canada: Dying with Dignity, Surrey/White Rock Choice in Dying Society

Colombia: Fundacion Pro Derecho a Morir Dignamente

Finland: EXITUS

France: Association pour le Droit de Mourir dans la Dignite (ADMD)

Germany: Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Humanes Sterben eV (DGHS)

India: The Society for the Right to Die with Dignity

Israel: LILAC: The Israel Society for the Right to Live and Die with Dignity

Italy: EXIT-Italia

Japan: Japan Society for Dying with Dignity

Luxembourg: Association pour le Droit de Mourir dans la Dignite

Netherlands: Nederlandse Vereniging voor Vrijwillige Euthanasie (NVVE)

New Zealand: Voluntary Euthanasia Society (Auckland) Inc, Voluntary Euthanasia Society (Wellington)

Norway: Landsforeningen Mitt Livestement

Spain: Derecho a Morir Dignamente (D.M.D.)

Sweden: Rätten Till Var Dod (R.T.V.D.)

Switzerland: EXIT Vereinigung für humanes Sterben, EXIT Association pour le Droit de Mourir dans la Dignité (Suisse Romande)

United Kingdom: Friends at the End (FATE), Voluntary Euthanasia Society England & Wales

United States: Compassion in Dying Federation, Euthanasia Research & Guidance Org (ERGO!), Hemlock Society of Florida, Hemlock Society USA

Zimbabwe: Final Exit

For further information on the World Federation of Right to Die Societies, its by-laws and its individual member societies contact the web site at www.worldrtd.net