

EUTHANASIA IN FIGURES

Arguments for the debate



This article shows figures and data from the main countries where euthanasia is legal. This piece of information aims to show whether this is the path to be followed as a society. This article intends to contribute to a serene and realistic debate.

The sources of information, which are indicated with superscript numbers in the text, can be checked at the end of the document.

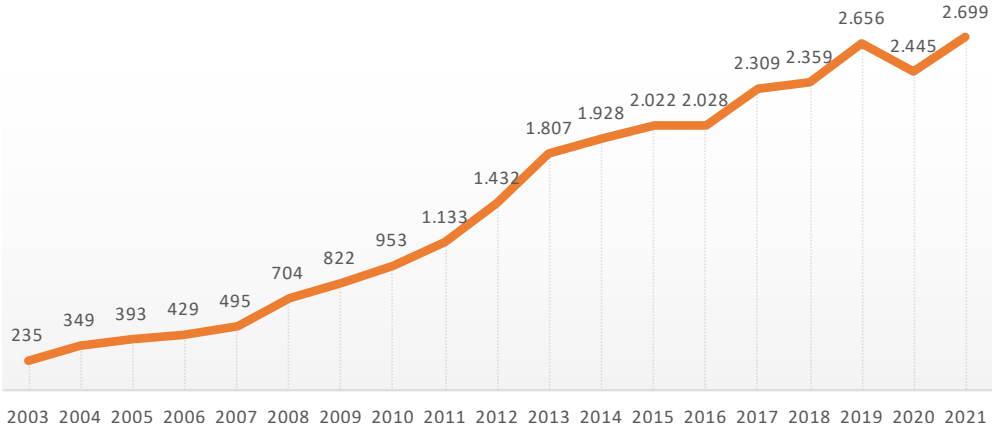
A small minority of countries

Only **eight** countries in the world have legalized euthanasia.^{1,2}

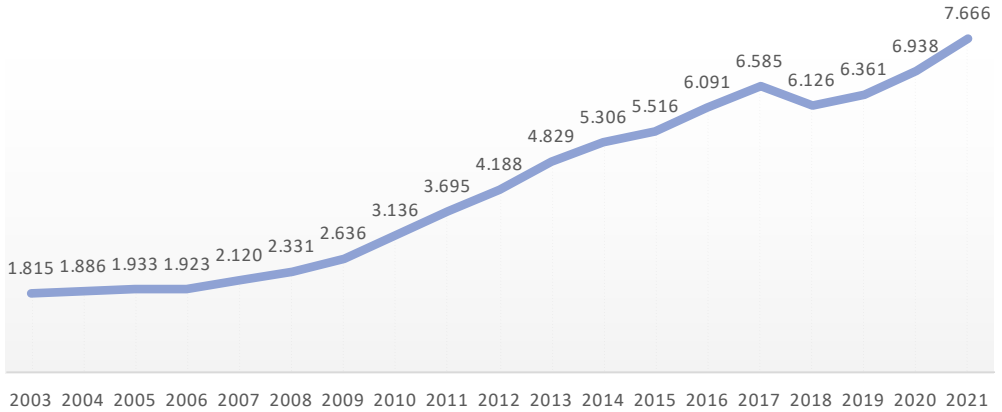
Euthanasia figures are soaring :

The number of euthanasia cases reported in countries where it is legalized increases every year:

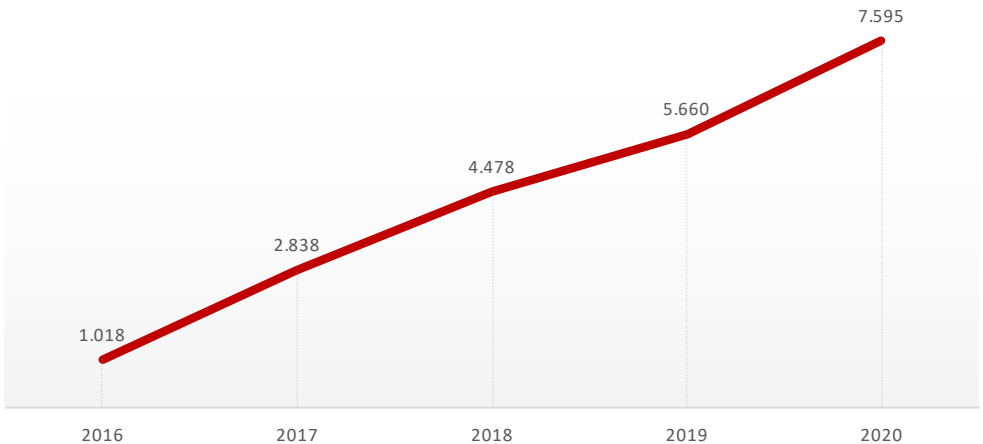
1. Euthanasia in **Belgium** has increased tenfold between the years 2003 and 2021, going from 235 to 2,699.^{3,4,5}



2. The **Netherlands** went from 1,815 reported cases in 2003⁶ to 7,666 in 2021 (1 in every 22 deaths).⁷



3. **Canada** legalized euthanasia in June 2016⁸ and the number of cases in 2020 already accounts for 2.5% of all deaths.⁹



Euthanasia cases without request

Belgium. Almost half of the nurses admit to having participated in life-ending acts without the explicit request of the patient.¹⁰ In 2013, throughout Flanders, the deaths of 1,047 patients were hastened without explicit request from them. This number accounts for 25% of all induced deaths and 1.7% of all total deaths.¹¹

The Netherlands. In 2015, 431 cases were recognized of people having had their “lives terminated” without explicit request.¹²

Resignation from the Assessment Commission

Dr. Vanopdenbosch, a pro-euthanasia physician, resigned in 2019 as a member of Belgium’s Federal Control and Assessment Commission on Euthanasia because he was unwilling “to be part of a committee that deliberately violates the Law”.¹³

Lack of control in the application

Euthanasia assessment and control commissions rarely report a case of medical malpractice to the public prosecutor’s office.

The Netherlands. Until 2020 only three cases were submitted to the public prosecutor’s office. One in 2016 and two in 2017.

Belgium. Only one case, which was recorded for a television program, was submitted to the prosecution in 2010.¹⁴

Non-compliance with the law

The Laws of Belgium and the Netherlands require the report of euthanasia procedures, however, 23% of euthanasia conducted in the Netherlands¹⁵ and 47% of euthanasia conducted in Flanders (Belgium)^{16,17} are not reported to the official registry; the Law is broken with impunity.¹⁸ Some physicians even admit publicly that they often ignore the Law and do not report the euthanasia procedures they carry out.¹⁹

Slippery slope

Ever expanding scope of the Law.

- Non-terminally ill patients.^{20, 21}
- Psychiatric patients or those with dementia.^{22, 23}
- Minors. Belgium, in 2014, became the first country in the world to authorize euthanasia without age limit.²⁴
- People who are “tired of living” or had “lived long enough”. This is on current debate in Belgium and the Netherlands.^{25, 26}

A big deal for a few

The Netherlands. In The Hague there is a clinic specialized in euthanasia (Levensindekliniek, «End of Life Clinic»). They receive 3,000 euros from insurance companies for each euthanasia performed.²⁷ In 2019, 900 of the 6,361 euthanasia cases reported nationwide were conducted there.²⁸

Canada. The parliament forecasts a reduction in healthcare spending of 149 million Canadian dollars (95 million euros) in 2021 as a result of the application of the Law on Euthanasia.²⁹

Situation in Spain

Euthanasia. In the first six months since the entry into force of the Law on Euthanasia (25/6/2021):³⁰

- Only ten autonomous communities have provided data.
- There have been 130 requests, of which 50 have been performed, few have been rejected and most are pending of approval.
- Three out of four euthanasia procedures have been conducted in Catalonia and the Basque Country.

Palliative Care. Currently there is no Law on Palliative Care to ensure the provision of this specific medical care.

- 60% of the patients in need of palliative care in 2017 did not receive it.³¹
- There are less than half of the recommended palliative care specialist units per 100,000 inhabitants (0.6 vs. 2).³²
- Spain ranks No. 31 in Europe in palliative care specialist units. It is situated between Romania and Moldova.³²

There is an urgent need to increase palliative care coverage to prevent suffering and maintain confidence in healthcare professionals. Euthanasia is inhumane and should be prohibited to ensure life and the safety of patients.

*«Euthanasia is going to result in the most serious crisis of medicine's ancient history because, for the first time in history, the doctor is going to be the death manager of his patients, something absolutely outrageous and which goes against the most essential, most basic and deeply rooted principles of his/her raison d'être».*³³

Video

Dr. Marcos Gómez Sancho
Expert in Palliative Care and Bioethics



«The Gospel of God's love for man, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of life are a single and indivisible Gospel».³⁴

We should pray and act to spread love for every single human life until its natural end.



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