

# Vulnerable Dutch Citizens are Threatened by Legalized Euthanasia

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The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition is concerned that vulnerable Dutch citizens will continue to have their lives taken without consent, now that the Dutch parliament has formally legalized the practice of euthanasia. Euthanasia has been happening, with guidelines, since the Dutch Supreme Court ruled on the issue in 1984. Even though the legislation includes "strict guidelines," the experience in Holland with such guidelines (which are often ignored) has proven that once euthanasia is tolerated for some reasons it becomes accepted for all reasons, and it is often performed without the patient's consent.

This year the Dutch courts acquitted a doctor for killing a patient who was experiencing depression. Since depression is a treatable condition, and effects a person's ability to "freely choose," death has become an option in Holland for treatable conditions. Holland is also renowned for the almost non-existence of hospice/palliative care. Proper pain and symptom management should be considered essential to the art of medicine, and yet due to the acceptance of euthanasia the Dutch have not developed the needed hospice and palliative care programs. The Dutch euthanasia program has turned killing into the only available "caring" option.

We are concerned that vulnerable Dutch citizens, including the: disabled, the elderly, the chronically ill and the poor, who's are already being killed (in many cases without their consent), are directly threatened by euthanasia. These practises will only become worse now that euthanasia has been legally prescribed. Will institutions for the aged or the disabled one day be redundant due to legal euthanasia?