



To the Office of the Prime Minister of Belgium

We call on you to do everything in your power to end the plight of individuals and families who suffer the consequences of your current laws on euthanasia.

When Belgium first legalized euthanasia in 2002, the Government committed itself to strict criteria to regulate the practice. However, 17 years later, the number of deaths annually has increased by more than 700% since its legalization. In 2014, this was extended even further with the legalization of euthanasia of children—there is now no age restriction for minors in Belgium.

Symptoms like worsening eyesight, hearing, and mobility loss have, in a number of cases, been considered ‘unbearable suffering’ and qualified patients for euthanasia. Lawmakers have proposed limiting freedom of conscience and silencing doctors who are opposed to carrying out euthanasia.

We will be judged as a society on how we care for the weakest and most vulnerable amongst us. International law does not grant or imply a so-called ‘right to die’. On the contrary, it solidly affirms a right to life—with particular protections for the most vulnerable members of society. The slippery slope of euthanasia laws is on full public display in your country and we now see the tragic consequences with an ever-increasing gravity.

More than five people are euthanized every day. Frighteningly, this may yet be the tip of the iceberg. Belgium has set itself on a trajectory that—at best—implicitly tells its most vulnerable members their lives are not worth living.

As a global human rights organization, advocating for respect for the right to life and for freedom of conscience, ADF International have published a white paper entitled *The Legalization of Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide*. It documents the harmful consequences of existing euthanasia laws and practices, showing that euthanasia cannot be reconciled with international law and that, wherever it has been legalized, it has been continually expanded.

The European Court of Human Rights has recently accepted the case of Tom Mortier, a Belgian citizen, who lost his mother to euthanasia. Her life was abruptly put to an end on the grounds of her fight with depression. This was done without even giving notice to her closest family who were robbed of the opportunity to help her. Belgian authorities refused to pursue Mortier’s case. The European Court of Human Rights is now his only chance to seek justice for the loss of his mother and all of the families who have lost someone to euthanasia. Its findings will impact 800 million Europeans in 47 countries.

ADF International and the signatories to this letter, urge the Government of Belgium to protect the fundamental right to life, value the dignity of the most vulnerable, and end euthanasia today.