

Title of the writing: The Last Rights: Euthanasia, the Sanctity of Life, and the Role of Law

Abstract

The role of law in end-of-life issues is arguably one of the most controversial and perpetually debated issues in the field of law. This issue is so complex that it transcends law *per se* and requires consideration of ethics, philosophy, and medicine.

This thesis specifically takes a closer look at the regulation of euthanasia and assisted suicide, along with a description of other end-of-life rights, such as the right to refuse treatment and other rights. The thesis is also structured in this spirit, with the first chapter providing a more detailed definition of basic terms, such as the types of euthanasia, assisted suicide, palliative care, and related concepts.

Then, using a comparative method, the legal systems of countries that have already legalized assisted dying in some form are briefly introduced, with attention to their historical context and the way these changes were adopted. Within this chapter, the importance of case law and jurisprudence for the possible future regulation of end-of-life rights is further elaborated.

The main body of the thesis then compares the arguments presented by proponents and opponents of assisted dying, emphasizing the fact that debate on this issue is both possible and inevitable in the future. The thesis here addresses the so-called slippery slope—the fear of the consequences of legalizing assisted dying. It also examines the principle of the sanctity of human life, palliative care as a possible response to advances in medicine, and current legal procedures at the end of an individual's life in comparison to assisted dying, with the aim of finding an answer, or at least an acceptable compromise, to the question of whether the protection of human life or individual freedom and dignity holds greater importance.

Last but not least, the thesis provides an analysis of the key case law of the European Court of Human Rights, the Supreme Court, and non-European judicial institutions, exploring their views on the possible existence of a right to death, along with considerations as to whether assisted dying could be incorporated into the current legal framework of the Czech Republic, and a reflection on who should initiate such a change.

Finally, the thesis reflects on *de lege ferenda* proposals and points out the shortcomings in current legislation that contribute to legal uncertainty regarding end-of-life rights.

Key words:

Euthanasia

Assisted suicide

Last rights

The sanctity of life