

Euthanasia Law In The United Kingdom And Netherlands

Posted on September 5, 2019

Part A

Introduction

The word Euthanasia is taken from the Greek Language that means good health. Euthanasia is defined as the deliberate end of life by another person at the request of the person who dies. One of the common forms of euthanasia is assisted suicide. Generally, several experts define euthanasia in a wider sense. It includes all decisions planned to bring the death of an individual to limit or prevent the suffering of that person. The paper compared laws related to euthanasia between two countries, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. On 1st April 2002, one of the persons requested termination of life. Since then, the act of assisted suicide has come into practice and became legal. The Netherlands was the first country in the world where euthanasia was legalized. On the other hand, in the UK, euthanasia is illegal. In the UK, it is unacceptable in practice as well as from a legal point of view. However, in practice, the adult can refuse treatment, while children and incompetent adults will get treatment in their best interest.

The essay aims to discuss the law of euthanasia in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The essay will begin with the reason why euthanasia is legal or illegal in any of these two countries and its influences and role in society's values and beliefs. The essay will be summarized with the main points.

Main Body

Euthanasia has no significant position in the law of the United Kingdom in which it is considered manslaughter or murder. On the other hand, in the Netherlands, it is legalized, and doctors are allowed to perform euthanasia. One of the main reasons for the legalization of euthanasia in the Netherlands is the debate for the last 30 to 40 years between courts and health professionals regarding its importance in saving the patient from pain. In the United Kingdom, the reason for its illegal status is related to a large number of factors, such as religious opposition and other ethical issues. In both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, distinct legal bodies are there that are responsible for developing and amending medical laws. In the United Kingdom, the Council of General Medicine appears in the development of every law that is related to medicine. It is considered one of the important reasons for the illegal status of Euthanasia in the United Kingdom. In the United Kingdom, several protests have been held by doctors and certain celebrities to change the current

law of prosecution. However, campaigns have also started in favor of this law by different organizations, such as the disabilities group Not Dead Yet UK (NDYUK), to support palliative care instead of euthanasia in the UK.

Due to the different legal status of Euthanasia in both countries, it impacts greatly on the number of deaths related to euthanasia in both countries. (Suicide Act 1961) The survey between 2008 and 2010 has shown that 1.3 percent and 0.4 percent of deaths occurred due to voluntary and involuntary euthanasia. On the other hand, in the United Kingdom, 0.33 percent and 0.16 % of deaths are occurred by involuntary euthanasia and voluntary euthanasia, respectively. It has been clearly shown in this study that deaths by euthanasia in the Netherlands are three times more than in the United Kingdom. It is, of course, due to legalization in the Netherlands. Besides this, the rate of palliative care in the Netherlands has been reduced by almost 50%, and in more than 65% of cases of palliative care, physicians were not involved. In 12 percent of cases only, physician were consulted for the palliative care. It is believed that such a reduction in palliative care in the Netherlands is associated with the legalization of Euthanasia in the Netherlands. In the United Kingdom, several individuals and group of individuals raised their voices for the legalization of euthanasia. A large number of doctors want euthanasia to be legalized to prevent patients from pain and financial burden when outcomes of the treatment are also null.

Euthanasia is considered one of the sensitive issues because it is associated with the beliefs, values, and attitudes of people in society. The beliefs and values of every individual are different. That's why, for some people, euthanasia is good, while some people consider it negative. Healthcare professionals think that it should be legalized because patients in the terminal stage of the disease have a very low chance of surviving with a quality of life. On the other hand, people have a value system that is more often connected with their religion. They believe that euthanasia is a murder of a person. Therefore, they always show resistance to the acceptance and legalization of this law. From the perspective of people, active or passive euthanasia is not compatible with the professional duty of taking care of ill patients. Several people think that it challenges the primary duty of physicians, which is that of saving lives. Data from different studies have shown that people from the United Kingdom are more in favor of the legalization of Euthanasia.

Conclusion

The essay compared the laws related to Euthanasia in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Euthanasia is defined as an intentional death carried out by another person at the request of a person who wants to die. It is illegal in the United Kingdom, while it is legal in the Netherlands. It has created several impacts on the voluntary and involuntary deaths in both these regions. For instance, the rate of deaths due to voluntary and involuntary euthanasia is highest in the Netherlands as compared to the United Kingdom. There are several reasons that are responsible for the different legal statuses of euthanasia in both countries, such as legal bodies and many more.

In the end, I believe that the law related to Euthanasia is better in the Netherlands as compared to the United Kingdom. I believe that death by euthanasia is better than living with pain or living with a poor quality of life. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the opinions of the patient and respect his autonomy if care or treatment will provide no benefits to the patient. (Government of the Netherlands, 2002)

Part B

Communication Skills

It is important for the person who is associated with a legal professional to have strong written and oral communication skills. It will help them to carry out their duties efficiently. Excellent listening skills are necessary when working with different clients as they will help an individual develop relationships and build confidence. Written communication is also important for drafting legal documents and letters. It is important to have knowledge about several aspects of legal and technical language to convey the message in a concise and clear way. It is important to have interpersonal skills. A person who is affiliated with a law professional has to work in groups as well. These skills will help him or her to establish effective working relationships with colleagues. Communication ability will make it easy for an individual to work in a group and team.

Academic Ability

The law profession is very demanding, and most employers are looking for candidates who have the ability to draw knowledgeable conclusions and process difficult information. It is necessary to have the skills to show good performance under pressure and the capability to cope with stress and pressure. Besides this, employers also appreciate those people who are also involved in extra-curricular activities such as joining sports clubs and many more. All these things will make an individual understand every aspect of life that will help him or her in the legal profession.

Attention to detail

A sharp eye for accuracy is important for the success of the legal career. It is believed that a single word can change the meaning of a whole contract or clause. On the other hand, poorly written documents can give clients a bad impression that may damage the reputation of the firm. It is important for law students to work on spelling, grammar, and punctuation as it will give individuals an extra edge when applying for a job. It is necessary to read newspapers and other English papers to improve attention to detail.

References

Suicide Act 1961, c. 60 (UK). <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/9-10/60/contents>

Government of the Netherlands. (2002). *Termination of Life on Request and Assisted Suicide (Review Procedures) Act*.

<https://www.euthanasiecommissie.nl/the-committees/documents/publications/euthanasia-code/euthanasia-code-2022/euthanasia-code-2022>