Resolution 613 (1976)[1]

Rights of the sick and dying

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Believing, for reasons set out in its Recommendation 779 (1976) on the rights of the sick, and explained in the report of its Committee on Social and Health Questions (Doc. 3699), that the true interests of the sick are not always best served by a zealous application of the most modern techniques for prolonging life ;

2. Convinced that what dying patients most want is to die in peace and dignity, if possible with the comfort and support of their family and friends ;

3. Concerned that unnecessary anguish may be caused by uncertainty over the most appropriate criteria for the determination of death ;

4. Insisting that no other interests may be considered in establishing the moment of death than those of the dying person,

5. Invites the responsible bodies in the medical profession in the member states to examine critically the criteria upon which decisions are currently based with respect to the initiation of reanimation procedures and the placing of patients into long-term care requiring artificial means of sustaining life ;

6. Invites the European Office of the World Health Organisation to examine the criteria for the determination of death existing in the various European countries, in the light of current medical knowledge and techniques, and to make proposals for their harmonisation in a way which will be universally applicable not only in hospitals, but in general medical practice.

1. Assembly debate on 28 January 1976 (23rd Sitting) (see Doc. 3699, report of the Committee on Social and Health Questions). Text adopted by the Assembly on 29 January 1976 (24th Sitting).