

France to open debate on legalizing assisted suicide

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French President Emmanuel Macron speaks to the media during a joint statement with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis prior to their working dinner at the Elysee Palace in Paris, Monday Sept. 12, 2022. Emmanuel Macron announced Tuesday Sept.13, 2022 a national debate meant to broaden end-of-life options that will include exploring the possibility of legalizing euthanasia, with the aim to implement changes next year.Credit: AP Photo/Michel Euler, File

French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday announced a national debate on end-of-life options that will include exploring the possibility of legalizing assisted suicide.

A 2016 French law provides that doctors can keep terminally ill patients sedated before death but stops short of allowing assisted [suicide](#).

Macron said in a written statement that a panel of citizens would work on the issue in coordination with [health care workers](#) over the coming months, while local debates are organized in French regions.

The government plans to hold parallel discussions with lawmakers from all [political parties](#) to find the broadest consensus, with the aim of implementing changes next year, the president's statement said.

Some French patients travel to other European countries to seek further end-of-life options. While campaigning for his successful reelection this year, Macron promised to open the debate in France, suggesting he was personally in favor of legalizing [physician-assisted suicide](#).

Assisted suicide, which involves patients self-administering a lethal dose of drugs, is allowed in Switzerland. Euthanasia, a process in which a medical professional directly gives the drugs, is currently legal in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Spain under certain conditions. .

Macron's announcement came the day the family of French director Jean-Luc Godard said he died by assisted suicide at his home in the Swiss town of Rolle.

French polls in recent years steadily showed a broad majority of people are in favor of legalizing euthanasia.

The current law allows patients to request "deep, continuous sedation

altering consciousness until death" but only when their conditions are likely to lead to a quick death.

Doctors are allowed to stop life-sustaining treatments, including artificial hydration and nutrition. Sedation and painkillers are allowed "even if they may shorten the person's life."

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