



INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

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“CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION IN HEALTH SERVICES: ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT”

This is a proposal for action on a general principle: to communicate the following idea to professionals (especially in Health and Law), to politicians, to those who work in the academic area and to public opinion in general, the idea that conscientious objection is a key right by which to measure the pluralism and democratic health of a society. At the same time, one must specify that recourse to conscientious objection has to be directed towards the defense of legal rights, the social and cultural freedoms and values enshrined in the great Human Rights Declarations: the right to life, to religious and ideological liberty, to academic freedom, to liberty of profession and association, etc. Therefore it is appropriate to act with caution when having recourse to conscientious objection in order to demand recognition, especially before the courts, supposed “rights” or personal pretensions which, by their nature, are not closely linked to values or rights that are at the root of our Western civilization. An indiscriminate proliferation of “conscientious objections” might produce an undesired effect: the non-recognition, also indiscriminate, of conscientious objections firmly attached to fundamental rights and values.

For health professionals in particular, it is necessary to continue to counsel and to legally assist objectors, And in line with the Report which we submitted to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe last June, we have to denounce, taking them to the Courts if it were necessary, those policies,



programs, dispositions, orders, etc., of the health Administration that infringe upon the legitimate right to conscientious objection of health professionals.

We have to continue insisting before the pertinent professional associations that they clarify those points of the new Code of Ethics and Medical Deontology which, by reason of containing ambiguities, may provoke confused interpretations or give rise to defenselessness among professionals who opt for a legitimate conscientious objection. We must encourage doctors and other health professionals to participate and/or cooperate with the Deontology Commissions of their professional associations.

We have got to contribute to the promotion of adequate preventive health policies, non-ideological but rather scientifically founded, in view of the sexually transmitted illnesses and, especially, of the use of the Morning After Pill. In this sense, we need to further actions in two directions: preparation of reports with medical, social health, legal and ethical considerations to send to the Ministry, members of parliament and other public organisms not only to modify the present “status” of the Morning After Pill, , BUT ALSO to propose educational and health, etc. measures that deal with what we see as the heart of the problem: the lack of affective sex education in accordance with the dignity of all persons, especially of youth.

Coordinated actions have to be carried out between the professional associations and the pro-life entities, in order to get resolutions from international organisms that are more in accordance with respect for the right to life. Particularly, we need to continue working for international recognition of the human embryo statute.

We must propose legal and political measures which contribute to affirming the dignity of the sick and the elderly who are in the final stage of life, by recognizing and guaranteeing, via opportune legal mechanisms, the right to quality palliative care, as well as to assistance from trained professionals; in this sense, the speciality of palliative medicine should be recognized at all levels and palliative care units, whether of the hospital or home assistance types, should be financially endowed.

With regard to present Spanish social health policy, the following has to be done: send reports, arrange meetings, send letters, etc., so as to institutionally make known, to the politicians responsible, our proposals for the full recognition of conscientious objection in health and, at the same time, to promote measures of support to maternity and assistance to pregnant women at risk, and to guarantee legal protection to the life



of the “nasciturus” as indicated by the Constitutional Court. In a word, we must try to abolish any law or disposition that enshrines abortion as a right or as a therapeutic solution.

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