



## **ASSISTED DYING LAWS AROUND THE WORLD - AN EXPLANATORY KEY**

The term 'assisted dying' refers to assistance from another in the sense of facilitating and implementing a longstanding and persistent wish to die.

It is legal for someone who is **terminally ill or incurably suffering** to access an assisted death in: [Belgium](#), [Canada](#)<sup>1</sup>, [Luxembourg](#), [The Netherlands](#), and [Switzerland](#).

It is legal for someone who is **terminally ill** (meaning that they have been diagnosed with a condition that will lead to death within six or fewer months) to access an assisted death in: [Colombia](#) and parts of the USA ([California](#), [Colorado](#), [Hawaii](#), [Maine](#), [Montana](#), [New Jersey](#), [Oregon](#), [Vermont](#), [Washington](#), [Federal City Washington DC](#)), and the Australian state of [Victoria](#).

The provision of assistance to die for 'compassionate' reasons carries a **reduced sentence** in: [Austria](#), [Bolivia](#), [Denmark](#), [Finland](#), [Norway](#), [Poland](#), [Portugal](#), [Spain](#), [Uruguay](#)

It is legal in [France](#) for someone to actively request to be continuously sedated, and have their life-sustaining medical treatment withdrawn (**terminal sedation**) if they are terminally ill.

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<sup>1</sup>According to Canada's [official guidance](#), someone 'does not need to have a fatal or terminal condition to be eligible for medical assistance in dying'. However, at the time of publication, [two](#) separate [legal](#) cases have been launched in Canada which seek to expand access further.

The legal status of assisted dying is **unclear** in Japan and Germany. In Japan, two local judgements in [1962 and 1995](#) indicate that it is possible to provide someone with assistance to die without breaking the law. Despite these judgements never having been explicitly overruled, they were departed from in two criminal cases in [2005](#) and [2007](#). In 2015, the German Parliament passed a consolidating [law](#), which stated it was illegal for those who had a 'business opportunity' to promote the suicide of another. However, the meaning of a 'business opportunity' has not been clarified. In addition, in 2017 the [German Federal Administrative Court](#) ruled that in exceptional cases someone that is 'seriously and incurably ill' cannot be denied access to potentially life-ending prescriptions. The legal status of assisted dying has not [been clarified](#) since.

**To see a digital copy of this briefing so that you can access the hyperlinks we have referenced, please go to <https://humanists.uk/assisteddyingmap>**

**For any more details, information and evidence, contact Humanists UK:**

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