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## **For the Constitutional Court, assisted suicide remains the exception rather than the rule**

The Constitutional Court has ruled against recognizing a generalised right to terminate one's own life in all circumstances of suffering. This is a significant statement. The practice of assisted suicide is therefore regarded as an exception, and as such, no unfair treatment occurs with regard to patients who depend on life-sustaining treatment vis-à-vis those who do not. Conversely, the Court justifiably asserts that the "objective" necessity of being under medical supervision precludes "indirect social pressure" on individuals who are sick or simply elderly and lonely. These individuals, the Court notes, may "conclude that they have become a burden on their families and society as a whole, and thus decide to end their lives prematurely." The Italian position, as determined by the Court, is thus deemed to be both valid and consistent with the recent stance of the European Court of Human Rights. Nevertheless, the Court would appear to adopt a stance whereby life-sustaining treatment does not necessarily equate to a complete replacement of vital functions. Rather, it may encompass treatment that is deemed essential "to ensure the exercise of the patient's vital functions to such a degree that its omission or interruption would foreseeably result in the patient's death within a short period of time."

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