

### Letter to the Editor

Sir – The position paper on euthanasia from the Ethics Task Force of the EAPC has helped us all to a certain extent to examine where we as individuals and as an association stand in this debate on euthanasia. However, to avoid confusion and compromise, we who are practising palliative care must ask ourselves what is our goal/our vision in palliative care? 'Intent' is all important in distinguishing between euthanasia and terminal or palliative sedation. But even more important is our goal and our vision. Therefore, it is critical that we first agree on what our goal/vision is. If our vision is 'restoring wholeness' in the person who is dying and in his family who will be left behind, then euthanasia will have no place whatsoever. Then the intent of relieving intolerable

suffering through a process of terminal sedation is in keeping with our goal/vision, and is only a part of the total care for that person and his family. However, if our goal/vision is limited to 'achieving death without suffering', then we are leaving room for confusion and compromise. So then, it is time to re-examine and rediscover our vision for palliative care, for 'If the vision perishes the people perish'!

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