



Information is Power In life and death

Exit's aim has always been to ensure that those who seek end of life information and options shall have it. This tends to set Exit apart from other end of life choice groups who focus solely upon law reform.

To achieve the goal of true choice, Exit works to ensure that our Members have the knowledge they need, should they decide to take the step of ending their lives themselves. The information must be scientifically sound. The methods need to be accessible. And the price should be right.

Exit Commitment

When Exit began in 1997, Philip Nitschke spent the bulk of his time travelling from town to town and city to city. He would hold small, intimate workshops at country halls and community centres. As word of Exit spread, Exit workshops became larger

affairs. Sometimes, the personal touch would be lost. An audience of several hundred, by its nature, can make it difficult to ask questions and get the answers one needs.

To address the high demand for end of life information from older (and sometimes seriously ill) people around the world, in 2006 Exit published *The Peaceful Pill eHandbook*. In 2022, a new slimmed-down, succinct 'Essentials' edition was published in online and print formats.

The online edition of the PPeH is updated almost every month as new information comes to hand and new strategies are developed. The PPeH is now the 'go-to' guidebook around the world on the practicalities of how to achieve a peaceful and reliable death at a time of one's choosing.

In 2025, Exit will recommence regular online events such as Workshop-Webinars and Snippets. These are offered free to Exit Members. See Page 7 for how to attend and stay informed.

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international

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Diary Dates

EXIT WORKSHOP-WEBINAR

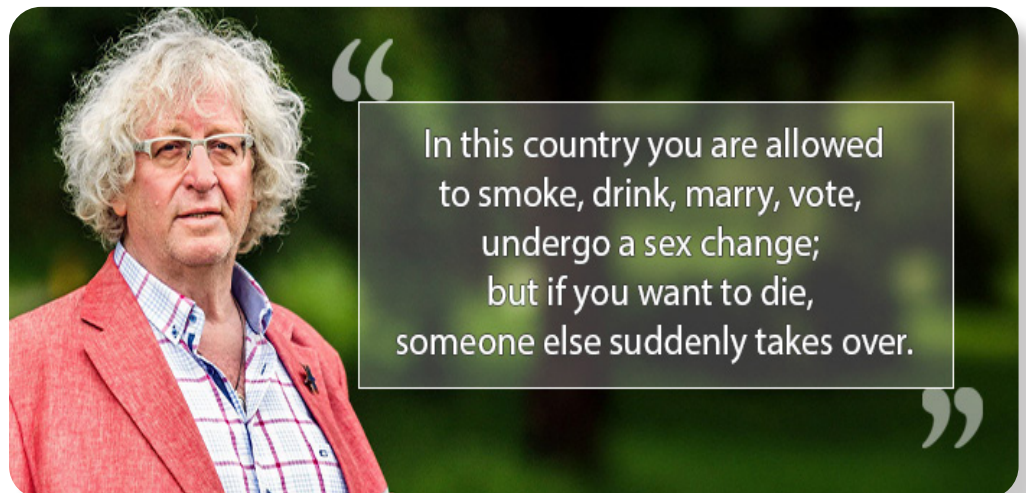
16/17 January 2025
(depending on your time zone)
Check the Exit website for details

NEWCASTLE MEETING

Thursday 20 Feb @ 1-3pm
Hunter Workers Centre
406-408 King St, Newcastle NSW

EXIT COFFEE & CHATS

All Exit Chapters hold local coffee & chat groups where members can come together informally. Contact your Chapter for details of meetings in your area.



“
In this country you are allowed to smoke, drink, marry, vote, undergo a sex change; but if you want to die, someone else suddenly takes over.
”

Jos van Wijk, Former President CLW organisation

First Use of Sarco in Switzerland

The Story to Date

The Background

After more than 12 years in the making, the 3D-printed Sarco capsule was used for the first time on 23 September 2024. The user was a 64-year old seriously ill American woman. She was a member of Exit.

The location for use was the Canton of Schaffhausen in Switzerland. Switzerland was identified as the most suitable location because of the unique way that Swiss law is structured around assisted suicide. A “weekender” (holiday house) was chosen for this important event.

23 September 2024

The first use of Sarco went according to plan. The device worked as expected. The woman lay down in the Sarco unassisted. She closed the lid unassisted. She pressed the activation button herself.

Film footage, oxygen level and heart rate monitoring showed she lost consciousness within two minutes and died within 7 minutes.

On legal advice, the only person present was Dr Florian Willet. Florian is the President of The Last Resort Association. German by birth, Florian is a permanent Swiss resident. Exit Director, Dr Philip Nitschke was in Germany, en route back to the Netherlands (as his role was over).

Philip was on the phone to Florian throughout the process. It had been pre-arranged that upon the woman’s death, the lawyers would be phoned. (Two lawyers had driven up from Zurich and were waiting nearby.) The lawyers would then a) call the local police and b) attend the scene to represent Florian.

After the Death

The events after the death took everyone by surprise. Once the police were called, it took them around two hours to arrive. And there were not just a few officers in attendance. Florian estimates that around 20 cars and 40 police arrived. It must have been quite a scene! Meanwhile he never saw the lawyers. Each person was detained separately.

The Arrests

On the day, four people were arrested: Florian, the two lawyers and a journalist from the Dutch newspaper de Volkskrant. She had returned to the scene some time later to see what was going on.

While the lawyers and the journalist were released after 48 hours, Florian was kept in custody for 70 long days and nights. He was interviewed a single time during this period of incarceration.



The Sarco as it was used in Switzerland in September 2024

First Use of Sarco in Switzerland Continued



The reason given in court for Florian's detention was that Florian was a 'flight risk'. It was also argued that there was a risk of collusion with others. (We will return to this issue in a minute.) But they (the prosecutor's office) also said - most importantly - that they also had a suspicion that the woman might have been killed (intentional homicide).

A phone call from the autopsy office the same night that the woman had died, reportedly said that the woman had marks on her neck and that it could not be ruled out that these were caused by strangulation.

Conflicting Evidence

According to Philip Nitschke the problem with this allegation, then and now, is that film evidence and oxygen trace show that the Sarco worked as planned and that no one interfered with her death.

The internal and external cameras at the scene of the Sarco show that the woman died of nitrogen hypoxia in the Sarco.

The film footage shows that the Sarco lid was not opened from the time the woman climbed in until

the time the authorities arrived. The footage shows that it was the authorities themselves who opened the Sarco lid. The oxygen trace monitoring supports the film footage.

Without a formal autopsy report, the reasoning of the public prosecutor's office remains unclear.

Florian's Release

As history now tells it, Florian was hurriedly released on Monday 2 December. News came through at around midday. By late afternoon he was back in his Zurich apartment (which had been ransacked by the police some 10 weeks earlier). Florian was released without conditions.

He was no longer a flight risk, there was no longer a risk of collusion and the prosecutor said they no longer had a 'strong suspicion' of intentional homicide. This, despite the continued absence of an autopsy report.

The Appeal Outcome?

In mid November, a request for Florian's release was filed by his lawyer and rejected in the Schaffhaus-

First Use of Sarco in Switzerland Continued

en court. Florian's lawyer then submitted an appeal against this decision.

A Presumption of Innocence?

We will never get to hear the outcome of that second instance court (as it is called). Florian got released before the public will ever know. Either way, what matters is that Florian is 'free' of an incarceration that should never have occurred.

Interestingly, the presumption of innocence (one of the corner stones of the rule of law) was mentioned in the prosecutor's media statement of 2 December after Florian's release.

Prior to this, the concept, let alone its application to the case at hand, had been absent in the statements of the public prosecutor.



Sarco Testing in Rotterdam May 2024

Florian's Time in Detention

The President of The Last Resort, Dr Florian Willet, spent a total of 70 days in jail in Switzerland. During his time in jail, The Last Resort/ Exit team did what they could to support him. When Florian asked for books, they were sent. When he requested an eye patch for sleeping and ear plugs for silence, they were sent.

Once Exit put out the call for letter-writing, correspondence poured in. Florian said his spirits lifted considerably each day when he received mail.

While Florian is not making public statements at the current time, he did tell Philip that he wishes to thank all those who wrote to him. He was incredibly grateful to receive these letters of support and they helped him endure the ordeal.

Florian now needs time to readjust to "normal life" after this travesty of justice.



Philip & Florian, Schaffhausen April 2024

EDITORIAL with Philip Nitschke

My Friend & Colleague Florian Willet

Dr Florian Willet became involved in The Last Resort association in early 2024. Prior to joining TLR Florian was the spokesperson for Dignitas in Germany for three years.

When we first met, it was clear that it was a meeting of minds and that he was a perfect match for TLR. We are honoured that he chose to work with us on the Sarco project. In doing so, he has become a respected and trusted member of our small international team.

This is why I have been (and remain) so upset and frustrated by Florian's unfair, unjust and totally unnecessary incarceration in Switzerland. The pre-trial detention of a man such as Florian raises serious questions about the rule of law in Switzerland.

In legal advice, the lawyers considered pre-trial detention to be a highly unlikely worst case scenario. Indeed, it was thought so unlikely that discussion on the topic was never seriously pursued. Yet it happened.

Florian was brave beyond words in volunteering to be the only person present when Sarco was used for the first time. His loss of liberty is an enormous price to pay for being a compassionate by-stander on the day of the first Sarco use. Our* collective debt to this brave man is immeasurable.

* Note - when I say 'our', I think I speak for everyone who believes in the right to self-determination at the end of life: every reader of this newsletter.

Exit Online Activities in 2025

In recent months, we have re-activated our successful pandemic-era online events, namely our Workshop-Webinars and Snippets. It makes sense

to use the online environment to have more events more often, rather than waiting for in-person tours. These events are free for Exit members.

To recap, the Workshop-Webinars are the online equivalent of Exit's face-to-face workshops. Of course, there is a bit of added fine-tuning. The next Workshop-Webinar, for instance, is on the topic of 'mistakes' and how to avoid them.

Snippets are our mini online workshops. They last an hour and focus on single-issue topics. The December Snippet examined the different types of deaths which different methods of death afford. This was timely given the recent reassessment of sodium azide (Middel X) in the Netherlands. While this means of death is no longer considered 'humane', there have been calls for a new debate that critically assesses what constitutes a 'normal' and a 'good' death. The Dec/January update to the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* is also on this topic.

Looking Back - Looking Forward

There is no doubt that 2024 has been a momentous year for a whole lot of reasons. Exit has stayed the course in providing critical and timely information for a self-determined death. Most importantly, we have proven that a peaceful and reliable nitrogen hypoxia death need not involve a plastic bag or a alien-like face mask. A Sarco capsule works well also. And so, too, will a cheap, off-the-shelf coffin when it is connected to a nitrogen generator. This will make this method of death accessible (both in terms of cost and effort) to all Exit members who seek it.

As this year closes out, I am now working on exactly this adaptation. Democratising a means of death that is peaceful and reliable is what we do here at Exit. I thank the Exit community for their continued support. See you all in 2025, whether that be face-to-face or online at the January Workshop-Webinar.

Exit Online Events

Workshop - Webinars & Snippets

During the pandemic, Exit did well in taking the majority of our activities online. This included running a Webinar series and a Snippet series.

While **online** is never as personal or as friendly as face-to-face events, the online environment remains a valuable way of imparting end of life information. The fact that Philip Nitschke (77) does not need to undergo the rigours of travel makes the option of online events for Exit members especially attractive.

In October 2024, Exit recommenced our Webinar-Workshop program. The **Webinar-Workshop** was attended by several hundred Exit members around the world. It was a valuable session and Philip was pleased to be able to meet and speak with members, regardless of their location. Take note - Exit's online events are **free** for all Members.

Looking forward, the next Webinar-Workshop will be held on **16/17 January 2025**. The event will last 2 hours and include time for audience Q&A. The aim is to answer Members' questions. If you would like to attend, the time zones are on the Exit website, along with the '**Register Now**' button.



Registrations close 8 January 2025!

More information is at:

<https://www.exitinternational.net/meetings/webinars/>

Exit Online Snippets

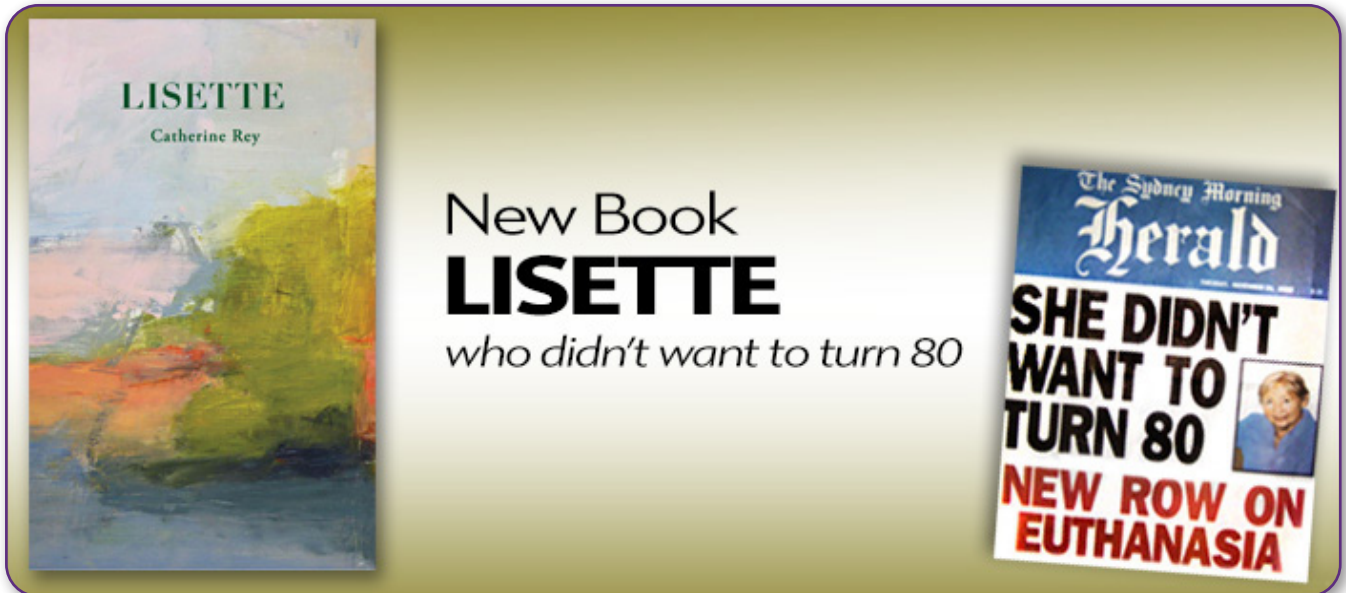
In between Exit's online Webinar-Workshops, Members are invited to attend **Exit Snippets**. Snippets are **one hour, single topic** online events with audience Q&A. Unlike the Webinar-Workshops which examine a range of topics, the shorter Snippets are focused on single issues.

The first Exit Snippet of the new series was held on 3 December. The topic of this Snippet was the different deaths provided by different methods. For example, is a Nembutal death the same as a Nitrogen death? This is also the topic of the forthcoming Dec/Jan update to the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* (coming soon).

If you missed the Snippet, its recording can be viewed within the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook*. Visit the Exit website for more information.



Lisette - A beautiful new book on the woman who did not want to turn 80



New Book **LISETTE** *who didn't want to turn 80*

It is over 20 years since the former French academic, Lisette Nigot, died at her home in Perth West Australia, because 'she didn't want to turn 80'. The subject of Janine Hosking's documentary 'Mademoiselle and the Doctor', Lisette is now also the subject of a new book by her friend and confidant, Catherine Rey.

A French expat living the good life in Australia, Rey knew Lisette well. She understood her state of mind and was deeply emotionally invested in their friendship. This is one reason why it has taken her so long to get the book written. The posthumous conversation she has with her subject must have been emotionally challenging to put down on paper. The benefit of Rey's toil is that we, the reader, now get a beautifully-crafted book that is full of insight into the human condition.

As the teller of the story, Rey writes from inside Lisette's mind:

17 November. Sunday. 6am.

You don't feel like doing it today. You never procrastinate. It's not like you. But you feel suddenly tired, overwhelmed, nauseated by the whole thing.

Today, you'll write the note you intend to pin on the wall of your bedroom. You'll keep it short. A brief and clear message.

You scrawl a few sentences and finally opt for these ones: After eighty years of a good life, I've had enough of it. I want to stop it before it gets bad.

Lisette was launched in September at Glebe Books in Sydney. It is now available at both Gazebo Books and online from Amazon (ISBN: 9780645920994).

Order now from Gazebo Books (Australia) at:
<https://gazebobooks.com.au/product/lisette/>

Or on Amazon (International) at:
<https://amzn.to/41IBXHk>



Support for Tired/ Completed Life - Rises in the Netherlands

In recent weeks the Dutch have proven (yet again) how open-minded they are on the issue of choice at the end of life.

A remarkable new survey shows overwhelming support for end of life choice for those who are *not* sick but who *are* tired of life or feel they have lived long enough and that their lives are completed.

Speaking of the survey results, the President of the largest euthanasia group in the Netherlands (NVVE) Fransien van der Beek has stated: *'We have incredibly good health care in the Netherlands, which is why we are getting older on average. But not everyone wants to live as long as possible.'*

'A lot of people care more about quality than longevity ... Certainly the new generation of elderly people. The baby boomers. They are used to making their own choices in life. They don't want to be dependent on children or caregivers, [they want to] fend for themselves.'



Also almost 40% said that they would prefer to be helped by an end of life counsellor rather than a doctor.

Slightly more than half (58%) believed that anyone who sought completed life help should be first assessed to ensure that their 'death wish' was genuine. The survey which was conducted last summer and was based on 1400 people aged 18-90 years.

Going to Switzerland 2025 Edition- Now Available

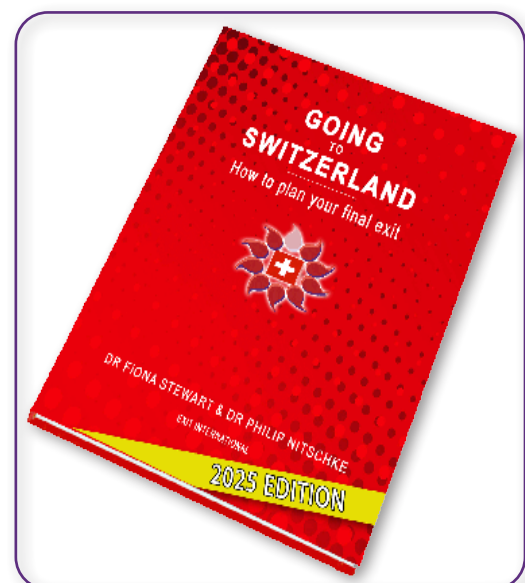
Going to Switzerland: How to plan your final exit is back in print and online after a significant rewrite. Since the Sarco controversy in recent months, the book needed a major overhaul. This is now complete.

The book aims to demystify the complicated process that surrounds dying in Switzerland. For Exit members, Switzerland has never been first choice. As a self-help organisation, Exit's focus has been (and continues to be) on strategies that can be adopted at home. However, we also realise that there is a small minority of people who like the idea of travelling to the other side of the world to get help to die, and that a group of people have the financial means to do so.

The new G2S edition discusses useful practical issues including: the operation of Swiss law, the paperwork, different methods of dying, travel advice,

the importance of telling family and friends, costs/ refunds, cremation and death certificates. Print and online editions are available at:

<https://goingtoswitzerland.net/>



The Exit Year in Review Slideshow



Did you know that most weeks Exit publishes an online email newsletter called 'The Exit Internationalist'. You can join the mail list on the Exit site where the archive can also be found.

The Exit Internationalist focuses on news and views related to end of life choices. This week, we published our annual 'Year in Review' slideshow.

In case you missed the Exit Newsfeed ...

Check it out on the Exit Website at: <https://www.exitinternational.net/the-year-in-review-at-exit-international/>

Other recent media which you may have missed.

29 December 2024, NRC: 'Never before has there been so much public focus on self-determination'
<https://www.exitinternational.net/never-before-has-there-been-so-much-public-focus-on-self-determination/>

20 December 2024, Trouw: 'Everyone has the right to die, believes the inventor of the Sarco'
<https://www.exitinternational.net/everyone-has-the-right-to-die-believes-the-inventor-of-the-sarco/>

19 December 2024, Trouw: 'Rijksmuseum Boerhaave to include suicide capsule in collection'
<https://www.exitinternational.net/rijksmuseum-boerhaave-to-include-suicide-capsule-in-collection/>

20 November 2024, NZZ: 'It seems as if Switzerland has suddenly become afraid of its pioneering role'
<https://www.exitinternational.net/it-seems-as-if-switzerland-has-suddenly-become-afraid-of-its-pioneering-role/>

2 November 2024, de Volkskrant: 'Commotion within Cooperative Last Will over side effects Sodium Azide'
<https://www.exitinternational.net/commotion-within-cooperative-last-will-over-side-effects-middel-x-sodium-azide/>