

Netherlands records first euthanasia death of child under 12



Photo: DutchNews.nl

A child under the age of 12 has died through euthanasia for the first time since the law was changed two years ago.

Health minister Sophie Hermans said the case had been reported to the committee that reviews all late-term abortions and medically assisted deaths of children.

Hermans revealed the child had died at the end of last year when she presented the [committee's annual report](#) to parliament on Monday.

No details about the child's circumstances, such as their age, gender or their medical condition, were given.

The death has also been referred to the public prosecution service, as happens with all euthanasia cases, who will decide if the doctors complied with the strict rules that protect them from being charged with unlawful killing.

When the law was extended to under-12s politicians expected around five cases per year to be reported. Previously terminally ill children who wanted to end their lives could only do so by palliative sedation or by refusing food and water.

Unbearable suffering

Euthanasia in the Netherlands is only permitted if the request comes from the patient and a doctor agrees that they are suffering unbearably with no prospect of relief. Around 6% of all deaths last year were through euthanasia.

The doctor must be satisfied that the patient is not acting under duress and must obtain a second opinion from at least one independent colleague.

In the case of a child under 12, their parents must give their consent once the doctor has established that there is no treatment available for their condition.

The committee's guidelines state: "The doctor will involve the child, insofar as they are capable, in the decision and must be satisfied that the child's life is not being ended against their will." -www.dutchnews.nl. June 23, 2026