

Press release

END OF LIFE: "Mario" is the first patient to get the green light for medically assisted suicide in Italy
The Ethics Committee decided that "Mario" falls within the conditions established by the Supreme Court
for access to assisted suicide, for the first time in Italy.

The modalities of implementation now remain to be identified.

Filomena Gallo – Secretary of the Associazione Luca Coscioni -: "The long waiting time is profoundly serious. Now let us proceed with indications on the self-administration of the lethal drug"

-Marco Cappato – Treasurer of the Associazione Luca Coscioni: "Putting an end to the passing of the buck"

"Mario" (fancy name) is the quadriplegic patient, living in the Marche Region, immobilized for 10 years who has asked the local hospital for over a year to verify his health conditions in order to have legally access to a lethal drug in Italy to end his suffering, according to the sentence of the Supreme Court which indicates the conditions of non-punishability of assisted suicide. After the denial of the Healthcare of the Marche Region (ASUR), a first and a second final decision of the Court of Ancona resulting in two legal warnings to ASUR Marche, **"Mario" has finally obtained the opinion of the Ethics Committee of ASUR Marche. The Ethics Committee, following the verification of his condition through a group of medical specialists appointed by the ASUR, confirmed that Mario possesses the requirements for legal access to assisted suicide as established in the Cappato-Antoniani (Dj Fabo) sentence by the Supreme Court.**

Mario after reading the opinion commented: "*I feel lighter, I have emptied myself of all the tension accumulated in recent years*".

Filomena Gallo, co-defender of Mario, declares: "the ethics committee has examined the report of the physicians who in recent weeks have ascertained the presence of the 4 conditions established by the Supreme Court in the Capato-Dj Fabo sentence, that is, Mario is kept alive by life-support treatments; is suffering from an irreversible pathology, a source of physical or psychological suffering that he considers intolerable; is fully capable of making free and informed decisions; and that it is not his intention to avail himself of other health treatments for pain and deep sedation. It is profoundly serious that it took so long, but finally for the first time in Italy an Ethics Committee has confirmed for a sick person, the existence of the conditions for assisted suicide.

On Mario's recommendation, we will now proceed to respond to ASUR Marche and the ethics committee, for the part that concerns the methods of implementing Mario's choice, so that the sentence of the Supreme Court and the decision of the Court of Ancona are respected. We will provide, in collaboration with an expert, the details of the methods of self-administration of the drug suitable for Mario, based on his condition. The ruling of the Supreme Court places on the public structure of the national health service the sole task of *verifying these procedures after consulting the territorially competent ethics committee*".

After the ruling of the Supreme Court that has in effect legalized assisted suicide, no sick person has so far been able to benefit from it, as the National Health Service hides behind the absence of a law that defines the procedures. Mario is still moving forward thanks to the courts, thus making evident the actual shifting blame game. After having forced the local Health Authority that refused to start the procedure, now it was the turn of the Ethics Committee. The definition of the process of administration of the euthanasia drug is still lacking. This tortuous path is also due to the paralysis of Parliament, which still three years after the request of the Supreme Court cannot vote even a law that defines the procedures for applying the sentence of the Court itself. The result of this institutional barrage is that persons like Mario are forced to endure even a judicial Cavalry, in addition to the physical and psychological sufferings due to their condition. It is possible that the decision of the Ethics Committee will soon allow Mario to get what he has been asking for for 14 months. But it is certain that to have clear rules that go beyond the issue of assistance to suicide legalizing euthanasia in a broader sense will require the intervention of the Italian people, with the referendum that partially decriminalizes the crime of murder of the consenting.