

# ALIANȚA FAMILIILOR DIN ROMÂNIA

## ALLIANCE OF ROMANIA'S FAMILIES

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The Secretariat  
Human Rights Committee of the United Nations  
Palais des Nations, Room XIX  
Avenue de la Paix  
1211 Geneva, SWITZERLAND  
via electronic delivery [kfox@ohchr.org](mailto:kfox@ohchr.org) and [sthodiyil@ohchr.org](mailto:sthodiyil@ohchr.org)

Re.: Half Day of General Discussion on Article 6 (Right to Life)

We are the Alliance of Romania's Families, a non-profit, civic organization organized under the laws and statutes of Romania. Our constituency consists of hundreds of thousands of citizens and parents. The Alliance was founded in 2007 to promote and protect in the public forum the fundamental interests of our community, among them pro-family practices, pro-life policies, and freedom of religion, conscience and expression. We are responding to the recent call of the Human Rights Committee for input from relevant stakeholders on **General Comment No. 36 - Article 6: Right to Life**. We are grateful for the opportunity to provide our input and make the following observations.

**First**, the right to life is the most important and fundamental of all human rights. Without it, no human society can exist. Accordingly, when deciding on its meaning, we believe the right to life should be given a broad construction. Only a reasonably broad interpretation of this right ensures meaningfulness for Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

**Second**, we profess that the unborn are human beings from the moment of conception and are entitled to the right to life. This right includes the right to life at every stage of development of the embryo prior to birth, from the moment of conception to birth. Our position is primarily based on ethical, moral, and religious grounds, but also on science. Science does not fundamentally disagree that human life begins at the moment of conception. Based on universally accepted scientific criteria, a new cell, the human zygote, comes into existence at the moment of the sperm-egg fusion, an event which occurs in less than a second. The behavior of the zygote is characteristic of a human organism. The scientific evidence supports the conclusion that a zygote is a human organism and that the life of a new human being commences at a scientifically well defined "moment of conception." This conclusion, science informs, is objective and consistent with the factual evidence. [See, Maureen L. Condit *When Does Human*

(2008)]

[http://www.ildf.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Appendix\\_A\\_When\\_does\\_Life\\_Begin\\_Condic\\_westchester\\_whitepaper\\_oct10\\_V2\\_print.pdf](http://www.ildf.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Appendix_A_When_does_Life_Begin_Condic_westchester_whitepaper_oct10_V2_print.pdf)

**Third**, the collective experience of humankind confirms that since days immemorial the unborn were viewed as human beings entitled to life. Long before modern medicine gave physicians a window into the womb, our predecessors understood and recognized that unborn children were more than merely lumps of tissue, or blobs, that could be discarded with impunity. For thousands of years, penalties attached to the suppression of the life of the unborn child. The first legal code known to history, the *Code of Hammurabi*, recognized the humanity of the unborn human being and punished its unintentional killing. The *Hippocratic Oath* likewise recognized the humanity of the embryo and its right to life, for it says, among others, "I will not give a woman a pessary to produce abortion." Early Medieval Europe likewise penalized abortion both civilly and criminally. And as early as the Thirteenth Century, the scientists of the day taught that a separate life existed once the unborn child's form became recognizable, at approximately 40 days of gestation. [Robert M. Byrn, *An American Tragedy: The Supreme Court on Abortion*, 51 *Fordham Law Review*, 807, 816 (1973)] Similarly, Eighteenth Century British common law viewed abortion as a crime punishable civilly or criminally depending on circumstances. Great impact in the legal aspects of abortion was made by the famed British legal commentator, Sir William Blackstone. Publishing in the Eighteenth Century, he wrote memorable words of universal truth which are still true today: "Life is the immediate gift of God, a right inherent in every individual; and it begins in contemplation of laws as soon as an infant is able to stir in the mother's womb. For if a woman is quick with child, and by a portion, or otherwise, killeth it in her womb; or if anyone beat her, whereby the child dieth in her body, and she is delivered of a dead child; this, though nor murder, was by the ancient law homicide or manslaughter." [William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* 129-130] This was followed by England adopting, in 1803, the first anti-abortion statute.

**Fourth**, the right to life must be given primacy over the right to take away life. The latter includes abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, and similar medical procedures which extinguish life before birth or before a person's natural death. We categorically oppose infanticide and post-natal abortion. Such practices are irreconcilable and inconsistent with the right to life. None of these practices can reasonably be said to be exempted from the prescription that each human being has the inherent right to life. Abortion, post-natal abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, and assisted suicide constitute, in our view, methods which arbitrarily deprive human beings, born or unborn, of their inherent right to life.

The arbitrariness of euthanasia and assisted suicide is reflected in the statistical reports published by countries which have legalized them, especially Belgium and the Netherlands. The 2014 Report for Belgium, for instance, reflects that in 2013 1.7% of all deaths there were persons euthanized without their consent. In 2007 this percentage was slightly higher at 1.8%. This is an exceedingly high and extremely alarming number, considering the relatively short period of time that euthanasia had been legal in Belgium.

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In closing, we thank you for the opportunity to tender our submission. We trust it will be found persuasive in support of the right to life of the unborn child.

Respectfully submitted,

BY: //ss// ***peter costea***

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Alliance of Romania's Families

