



EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND
SCHWEIZERISCHE BOTSCHAFT
AMBASSADE DE SUISSE
AMBASCIATA DI SVIZZERA

Ottawa, 02.10.2002

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Protection of Conscience Project
Mr. Sean Murphy
7120 Tofino St.
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Our reference 425.3 - MDV

Consequences of Swiss Abortion Legislation Change

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for the interest you have shown in results and consequences of the two popular referendums held in Switzerland on the 2nd of June 2002. In addition to this letter you find the official federal information brochure detailing the positions of supporters and opponents. The brochure was sent to all eligible voting Swiss Citizens beforehand and is therefore available in one of the four national languages.

The results of the referendums show that almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the population voted in favour of a liberalisation and more than 80% against a further tightening of the existing abortion law from 1942. This indicates an astounding popular demand for a change in our country's abortion legislation, which had ranked among the most rigid ones in Europe. Moreover, the liberalisation legislation was surprisingly approved of even in all but one conservative cantons (~ provinces), which are populated by a highly catholic majority. For detailed information about the results, you are kindly asked to consult the corresponding sheets attached to this letter.

According to our knowledge, there are no more hospitals existing in Switzerland that are based on a catholic foundation; all of them are now managed by secular directors. There are, of course, medical staff with religious inclinations employed in Switzerland, their number, however, is constantly declining. The only remaining indication today of some hospitals' former catholic orientation are their names such as St. Anna, St. Raphael etc.

Thus, according to our research, there is no more hospital in Switzerland that would truly qualify for the adjective „catholic“. This, consequently, renders the information in the newspaper report inaccurate, which you were referring to.

I hope to have adequately responded to your request.

Yours sincerely,

FOR THE AMBASSADOR OF SWITZERLAND


David Maurer



02/1563/AR-sr

Sean Murphy
Administrator
Protection of Conscience Project
7120 Tofino
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British Columbia
Canada V8A 1G3

Fribourg, 6th January 2003

Dear Mr. Murphy

Thank you for your letter from the 29th of November 2002.

Unfortunately, I have to inform you, that the information you've got from the Swiss Embassy in Canada is at 99% true. There have been in Switzerland a number of catholic hospitals with the name like St. Anna and so on. These hospitals have been under the direction of different religious orders like the sisters of Menzingen or the sisters of St. Anna or others. Unfortunately, those orders have had a lot of problems with their own recruitment and so the personal needed for hospital care isn't available among the religious. That's the reason why since several years, a lot of those hospitals originally under catholic direction, have been over given to civil and states administration. It remains possible that one or more sisters are still working in the hospitals, but they are only employees like others and normally don't have a function of direction.

This situation is one of the reasons why we haven't a greater impact as Catholics in the Swiss health policy.

I hope, that this information – even I would have preferred to give you another answer – can help you to understand the situation of Swiss health care.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Agnell Rickenmann
General Secretary of Swiss
Bishops' Conference