



exit  
international

- THIS ISSUE**
- 1-2 The Sarco Controversies
  - 3 Update Webinars 2022
  - 4 Snippet Recordings
  - 5 Exitorial
  - 6-7 Huib Drion Letter 30 Years
  - 8 Eye Witness - Middel X & PPHandbook News 2022
  - 9 Exit International Ireland
  - 10 Sarco goes Viral

- SAVE THE DATE**
- 23 February 2022  
Sarco Update Webinar
  - 5 March 2022  
World Premiere: Letting Go  
Whale Theatre, Dublin
  - April 2022 ??  
Unveiling of Sarco

# The Sarco Controversy

## Piquing the Public Imagination

**It is the familiar refrain: ‘if it weren’t for Covid this would be finished by now’. And so it goes with the Sarco project.**

Exit had fully expected the Sarco to have been used in Switzerland in 2020, but with the pandemic, this was not to be. And understandably so.

That is the bad news. The good news is that with the arrival of the new year, the Sarco project has made significant progress, finally.

The new internal mechanism (a piece of machinery that had to be custom made in the Netherlands, and which was subject to ongoing modification and changes) has finally been delivered. More than this, it has recently been successfully tested at Exit’s workshop and it worked flawlessly.

One problem solved, now let us move on to printing. The next round of 3D

printing could not be completed before the internal mechanism was completed. The final printing phase can now go ahead. The printing of this new Sarco is expected to be finished by April. All of this means that Exit will have a brand new Sarco very soon.

Plans for trial use in Switzerland are also back on track. Given the global publicity blitz that Sarco (inadvertently) attracted in mid-December, it is considered prudent to seek even further legal advice. We want to leave no legal stone unturned. Sarco must have as few obstacles as possible, both technologically and legally. Exit is now eagerly awaiting the answers on a final series of questions.

No longer a pipe-dream, Sarco will soon to become a reality: offering the means of a peaceful, reliable and non-medical death at a time of one’s choosing. This is what Exit International is all about.

Cont p.2



# Why is Sarco so Important?

Medical model, assisted dying laws are a good idea for the seriously ill. Exit Director, Philip Nitschke, knows this because of his time back in Darwin in 1996-97 when he helped four of his terminally ill patients to die under the *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act*.

But not everyone wants to wait until they are terminally ill, to put a plan in place. Nor does everyone want to ask a doctor to help them. This is where Sarco comes in.

Sarco is important because it represents a non-medical, yet lawful, end of life option. And, while it is based upon a similar physiological methodology to the exit bag (a low oxygen, low carbon dioxide death), there is no 'yuk factor'. The aesthetic of the Sarco is as beautiful, as it is intriguing.

This is perhaps why Exit has been so surprised by the criticism levelled at the Sarco from other right to die groups. Some groups have called it 'cold and impersonal' because a person enters the Sarco to die alone. Our reply is to note the unexplainable phenomenon which sees many people wait for their loved ones to leave the room before they die. Maybe not everyone wants their hand held? But let's not put our views on others.

Others suggested that the capsule would find little acceptance because of its use of gas. Sarco doesn't use poisonous gas. Rather, it creates an environment that is low oxygen. The air inside the capsule goes from containing ~20% oxygen and ~80% nitrogen (normal air) to 100% nitrogen. The person in the capsule breathes normally before quickly losing consciousness, and dying peacefully shortly after. Nitrogen is cheap and its supply is lawful.

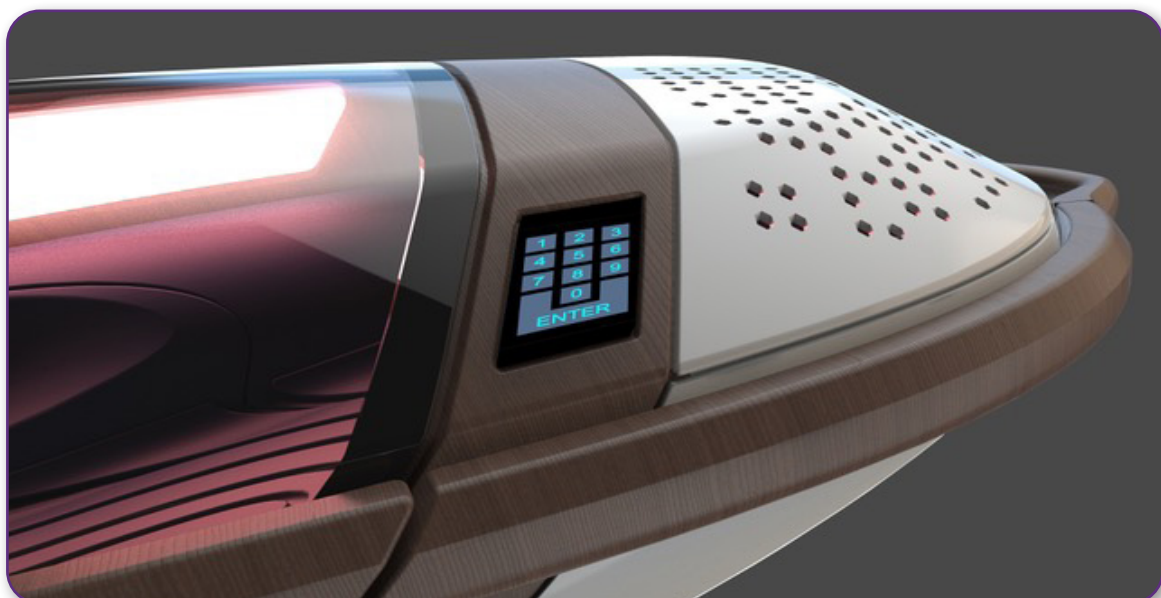
Still others thought that Sarco would be open to abuse. This is simply not possible. Under Swiss law, the person whose death it is, must push the button (or drink the drink) themselves. The button for Sarco can only be operated by the person who is within the capsule.

Sarco offers a glimpse of the future. A self-determined and peaceful journey at a time of one's choosing, to a destination unknown.

## Sarco goes Viral: the Backstory

In what proved quite a surprise, 2021 closed out with a Swiss news story about Sarco going viral.

Cont p.10



# 2022 Update Webinar Series

## Register Now

Following the success of the 2021 series of monthly online Snippet workshops, Exit has decided to continue with regular online events for our members (and subscribers to the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook*).

As the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* is the pre-eminent source of information on one's end of life choices, it makes sense to tie the new Update Webinar series of online talks by Philip Nitschke to the regular updates to the *eHandbook*.

Every time a significant update is made to the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook*, Exit will hold an Update Webinar on the same topic. These online events will discuss the content of that month's Update and allow for real time audience/ reader Q&A.

The Update Webinars will be held on the last Wednesday of the month of the Update. Update Webinars are free for Exit Members, regardless of whether or not they also subscribe to the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* (and available on subscription to current subscribers).

## Update Webinars 2022

### Time & Dates

Update Webinars will be held online on the last Wednesday of the month at 21.00 GMT (8am Sydney/ Melb time AEDT on Thursdays).

### Registration

Registration is required for each Update Webinar. The registration button is on both the Exit and Peaceful Pill Handbook websites.

### Cost

Update Webinars are free for Exit Members & US\$40 for PPeH Subscribers.

### Next Update Webinar

The first update Webinar is on the Sarco & will be held 21.00 GMT Wed 23 February/ 8am AEDT Thurs 24 February.

<https://www.peacefulpillhandbook.com/update-webinars/>



**NEW 2022**

**Exclusive**  
for Subscribers to the  
**Peaceful Pill**  
**eHandbook**  
&  
**Exit Members**

# Snippet Recordings

## Subscribe Now



**EXIT SNIPPETS RECORDINGS 2021**  
MINI TOPIC SPECIFIC ONLINE WORKSHOPS  
November Snippet on **SARCO**

Salts Nitrogen Peace Reliability Vomiting Premedication Barbiturates Opioids Shelf Life DRUGS The Essentials

**SUBSCRIBE NOW**

The banner features a stylized blue and white train engine on the right. A circular inset shows a man in a suit and glasses speaking at a laptop. The background is white with blue and grey accents.

Throughout 2021, Exit was pleased to hold monthly online workshops, called Snippets.

Snippets were held once a month and followed a set program with every month featuring a new topic selected from the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook*.

### Snippet Program 2021

February: Lethal Inorganic Salts  
March: The Gases  
April: Drug Premed. & Potentiation  
May: Morphine & the Opioids  
June: Dying in Switzerland  
July: Miscellaneous Drugs  
August: The Barbiturates  
Oct: The Lethal Mixtures  
Nov: The Devices, Debreather & Sarco  
Dec: Year in Summary – the Essentials

Recognising that not all members were able to attend every Snippet last year and in response to the many requests for recordings that we have received, we are pleased to announce that the full 2021 program of recordings of the online Snippets is now available on subscription (12 months).

There is a small cost associated with the production and distribution of the Snippet recordings and Exit apologises in advance to members for this.

Subscription Exit Members: US\$25  
Subscription PPeH Subscribers: US\$50

For more information about Snippets:  
<https://bit.ly/snippets21>

To subscribe to the 2021 Snippet Recordings:  
<https://bit.ly/snippetrecordings>

# EDITORIAL

Welcome to 2022. I'm sure I am not alone in hoping that it is a better year than the last two. Here in Europe it is another grim, grey winter. The Netherlands has just finished over one month of a hard lockdown with everything closed. Today is the first day that restaurants and cafés can re-open since well before Christmas.

In recent months, I have been working to get the Sarco project back on track. The sooner the capsule is completed and the sooner it is used in Switzerland by a person who is seeking that peaceful and reliable (and non-medical) death, and it proves successful, the sooner the plans can be made available more widely within the Exit community.

If one prints one's own Sarco no laws are broken. It is only if Exit provides the Sarco for another's use that the crime of assisting a suicide would be breached (except in Switzerland where assisted suicide has been decriminalised). This is why the first use of Sarco must be in Europe.

Apart from Sarco, last December I saw off the 10th online Snippet workshop with a summary of the year's activities. The Snippets are now available as recordings. I recommend their viewing for anyone wanting the latest information on any of the topics that we covered.



In 2022 we are now moving quickly with organising a new series of online webinars based on the updates that we will make each month to the *Peaceful Pill eHandbook*.

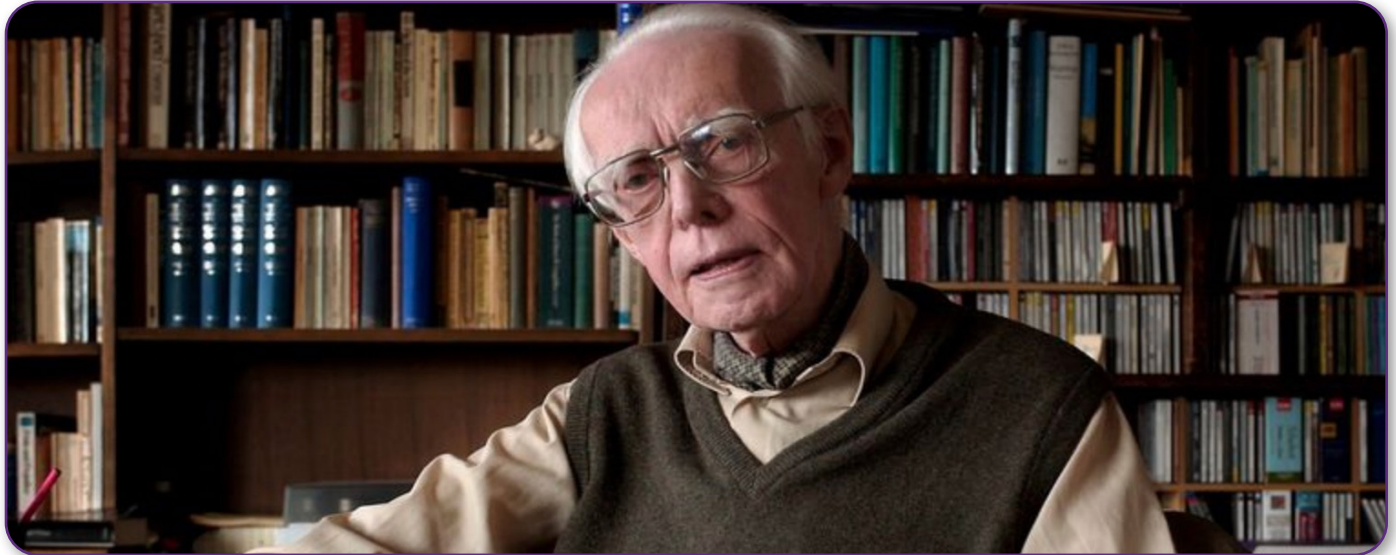
I must say that the Internet has been a boon during these covid years. While I miss seeing Exit members in person, the Internet has been a lifeline in allowing me to maintain connections. To this end we are planning an extensive tour of Australia and New Zealand late in 2022. We are waiting until then in order to have a better chance of not having plans disrupted by, for example, the emergence of another variant.

Before this time, I hope to conduct 2 casual, online Coffee & Chat sessions with Exit Members. The first of these will take place in early April (date tbc). We will advertise the dates as soon as they are confirmed.

Finally, I would like to introduce our newest family addition to Exit. Henny's death last August was heart-breaking. Our new Jack Russell (Katrina) arrived in October and has brought nothing but laughter and joy into our lives. She is now 6 months and already proving herself adept at handling long car rides and the odd hotel stay. As a Eurovision fan, she was named after Katrina and the Waves and their winning song from 1997, 'Love shine a light'. Fiona says that is what dogs do. I have to agree.

# Huib Drion Letter - 30 Years Ago

## Euthanasia is not only for sick people



### Introduction by Philip Nitschke

When former Dutch Supreme Court Judge, Huib Drion, wrote a short but pointed letter to the editor of the Dutch newspaper *NRC* back in 1991, little could he have known what his legacy would be.

I only met Huib Drion one time, in the late 90s when I visited him at his home in the Hague. I made the effort to see him because he was one of the first people to see the need to move beyond 'the medical problem' (as he called it) where euthanasia is only for people who are seriously ill.

This former lawyer and Dutch Resistance fighter is a hero to many in the Netherlands. Indeed, in Holland the 'Peaceful Pill' is more likely to be called the 'Drion Pill' following the public discussion that he created.

What remains so impressive about the thoughts of Huib Drion is that he started this discussion so long ago. It was 30 years ago last October since Drion's Letter to the Editor was published. This is a conversation that has been going on in the Netherlands ever since.

Be that as it may, in countries such as the US, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, it is still controversial to suggest that older people should also have the right to a self-determined death at a time of their choosing..

When my late mother Gwen mentioned in passing a few years back to one of the staff in her nursing home that she was fed up and 'would rather be dead', the next thing she knew she received an emergency visit from the nursing home's psychiatric consultant.

While many people come to the issue of end of life rights from the experience of a sick parent unable to get the dignified death that they want (and deserve), my story is that my 95-year old mother had to live for many more years longer than she wanted. And I couldn't work out how to help her. I think of Gwen every time I read Huib Drion's plea for social change and acceptance.

### In the words of Huib Drion

*Of course, our society already provides many means by which people can end their lives: there are trains that you can throw yourself into, there are buildings that you can fall down from, there are canals and rivers to drown yourself in, there is rope one can buy and I'll leave it at that.*

*But these are not very attractive means: neither for those who have to use them, nor for those around them and for society as a whole. Some members of our society may have more acceptable means: take doctors and pharmacists for example.*

*But for the majority of people, such means are not available. Their only hope is travel to a distant land in the hope that,*

# About the 'Drion Pill'

more or less surreptitiously, they will succeed in obtaining the substances needed. That's pretty much the current situation. What is it that maintains this situation as acceptable?

So far as society is concerned, most people are denied the means by which they can end their lives in a not too repulsive way. My question, however, is whether such a policy that makes the act of suicide as abhorrent as possible can be argued to be justified?

What for the old man [sic] who thinks he has lived long enough and who dreads a future life of continual decay? I do know: the division between old and not-so-old is not a sharp one. Those who are 20 will draw the line between old and not-so-old differently to a 75-year-old. But that does not alter the fact that a person who ends his life at the age of 75 can, in general, know better what kind of life he risks cutting short far more than a twenty-year-old.

The medical problem – that is those who are seriously ill – receives more attention in discussion of the euthanasia problem than those who are old. The great, usually unexpressed, concern of many old people, however, is that there will come a time for them when they will no longer be able to take care of themselves in the most basic things of life, due to physical and or mental deterioration.

Removing that fear, as much as is possible, seems to me to be an essential obligation for a society in which the number of old people is increasing. This obligation will not be met by merely providing care and nursing for old people who can no longer take care of themselves.

The provision of such care is, of course, essential, but it is not sufficient. A care home is far from a satisfactory solution for those who do not want to live a life being cared for by others.

To say that these people must jump into the water or jump off a block of flats or buy a rope, if they want to end their life, serves no one and nothing, not even the sanctity of life.

People never say it like that, of course, but in practice it doesn't make much difference.



The caption reads: We have our Drion Pill, Do you?

## What do I want then?

My ideal is that old people should be able to go to a doctor—either their general practitioner or a designated physician—to obtain the means by which, at the moment that it is right for them, they can put an end to their life in a way that is acceptable to themselves and to those around them.

That moment may be defined by the prospect of pain so severe that life is unbearable. But it may also be that the elderly person recognises that the time has come when he can no longer take care of himself: a time when he will have to find a nursing home where he will become dependent for care on others and where he has to spend his last days among only old people.

It is, of course, good that such homes exist, and it is good that there are people who are content to become dependent on others. But many old people who go to such homes to visit elderly relatives or friends find it almost terrifying to think that they, too, could end up there. These people have only one thought: if only I could be spared that, and in this – “that” – is taken to mean, not only the bleakness of this institutionalised existence but also one's loss of dignity.

Why then should such older people not be allowed to take matters into their own hands, to save themselves from becoming heavily burdensome on the community. Why not allow them the peace of mind that comes from knowing that they are able to prevent such an existence: an existence which they feel is unacceptable to them.

To go before one's time has come, at the moment that they want to?

# Eyewitness Reports of 'Middel X' & Peaceful Pill Handbook 2022 Plans

In December last year, the highly-respected Dutch newspaper, *de Volkskrant*, published an 8-page spread about Middel X (sodium azide). This cover story followed the deaths of three different people. The story was remarkable for the in-depth nature of the reporting and frankness of the discussion.

Not everyone who took sodium azide died well from it. Some of these eyewitness accounts raise significant concerns. But there is also the elusive, perfect peaceful death: where the mother has said her goodbyes, the substance works well and she is surrounded by family.

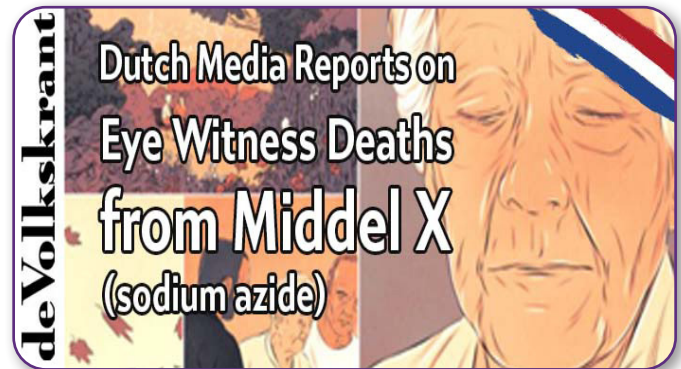
Investigative journalists Maud Eftting & Haro Kraak are to be congratulated on their writing.

## Peaceful Pill Handbook Plans - 2022

Ever since it was first published in 2006, the *Peaceful Pill Handbook* has been regularly updated. The print edition is updated annually. The online edition is updated most months.

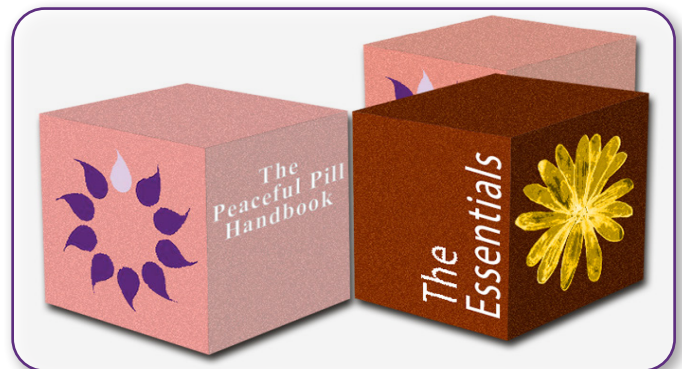
In 2021, the online *Peaceful Pill eHandbook* was updated no less than nine times to include new information & Chapter rewrites on topics including: USA Lethal Drug Mixtures, a new Chapter on the gases, a new Chapter on Morphine & the Opioids, news from Switzerland, the usefulness of anti-coronavirus helmets, new Middel X data, a new Insulin Chapter, notifications about the dark web and warnings about anti-emetic drugs.

The downside of continual updates is that the book grows bigger and bigger. There are now over 580 pages in the online *PPeH* edition. For most people this is far too much detail. For this reason, Exit is now working on an *additional* new, 200-page book to be titled: 'The Essentials'. This new condensed edi-



An English translation of the articles can be found on the Exit International website at:

<https://bit.ly/volkskrantmiddelx>



tion will focus on the most relevant, most important need-to-know information. Available only from Exit, *The Essentials* will not cover as many topics as the existing *PPeH*. For example, 'fringe' topics such as Insulin will be omitted, in favour of new topics such as 'stopping eating and drinking'. Exit is often asked why this topic was omitted from the original *Peaceful Pill Handbooks*. We usually say we focused only on strategies that are reliable and peaceful. However, given the enduring interest in this topic, it is important to now write about it.

The *Essentials* is now in production. Pre-orders will open in March 2022. The 2022 Amazon edition (full length) of the print *Peaceful Pill Handbook* is also now available (at Amazon).



# Exit International Ireland

## Tom Curran launches Exit International Ireland

It seems amazing to think that Tom Curran joined the board of Exit International some 11 years ago in 2010, and that since that time he has become the face of the right to die debate in Ireland.

Readers may recall that in 2013, Tom's partner Marie Fleming made Irish legal history when she sought a declaration in the Irish Supreme Court seeking the right for Tom to help her die.

Marie had become severely disabled as a result of MS. Had she been able-bodied she would have been able to orchestrate her own suicide. However, with extremely limited mobility, she needed help. Tom was prepared to help her as a final act of love. However the Courts turned Marie down but not before Justice Nicholas Kearns commented that Marie was 'the most remarkable witness' that the court had ever been 'privileged to encounter'. Marie died at home in December 2013.

With the right to die now on the political agenda in Ireland, it is the perfect time for Tom to launch the Irish 'wing' of Exit International.

Another instance of good timing concerns the March world première of a play written about Marie and Tom's struggle, titled 'Letting Go'. A different production of the play had been scheduled for March 2020 but Covid put paid to that. Let's hope that in 2022 the theatres stay open.

The Exit community is invited to the première on Saturday 5 March at the Whale Theatre in Dublin.

Exit Ireland can be followed on Twitter @ExitIreland. The Website is at: [Exitinternational.ie](http://Exitinternational.ie)

*Pictured right: Tom Curran & Philip Nitschke, Ireland November 2011*



# Sarco Goes Viral

## Responding to the Critics

Swissinfo.com reported that Sarco had passed a legal review. While this was true in the sense that Exit had commissioned a legal review of all aspects of Sarco's potential use in Switzerland, and that the legal opinion had been very positive, other media interpreted the headline to mean that the Swiss government had formally approved Sarco's use.

While it is perhaps understandable that journalists might think that Sarco *needed* government approval, this thinking reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of the Swiss *Criminal Code*. Assisted suicide is not illegal in Switzerland as long as one's motives are altruistic (& the person has mental capacity & they do the action themselves). Sarco needs no approval to be used lawfully in Switzerland. This is an important point.

What has been also interesting to observe, has been the negativity expressed by some of our colleagues in the right to die movement. This feedback could mean a few things.

**1.** Sarco is truly ahead of its time and the movement is not yet ready for change of this nature. **2.** A good death cannot happen without a doctor. Nothing will change some people's minds on this point. **3.** A good death should only be available to people who are terminally ill, rather than also to the elderly who feel they have lived long and enough and who want the privilege of choice extended to them (eg. Huib Drión, David Goodall, Laura Henkel, Lisette Nigot, Don & Iris Flounders & many many more). Or **4.** that only Nembutal (either via a bitter-tasting drink or a cannula in a vein or rectally) can provide a peaceful and reliable death at a time of one's choosing?

I won't continue guessing. Why?

Because in contrast to these criticisms, Exit has been equally flooded with feedback supporting the



fact that Sarco is a breakthrough end of life technology that is warmly welcomed.

Yes, Sarco is 'utopian' as Jan Clifford of Canberra has said. 'It is 'brave new world stuff, previously unthought of'.

### Objectives of the Sarco Project

Sarco is not only about getting doctors out of the dying picture. Nor is it only about dying somewhere beautiful, at a place of one's choice. At its most fundamental, Sarco is about putting control back in the hands of the person whose death it will be.

If used in Switzerland, Sarco is lawful. If one prints one's own Sarco and uses it oneself, this is also lawful since suicide is no longer a crime in most western countries. It is only if Exit gives the Sarco to someone else to die is the law broken (except in Switzerland).

I invite *Deliverance* readers to read my January 2022 'Open Letter to the Exit Community' on the Exit International website homepage.

More information about Sarco can be found on the Exit website under 'Programs'. Watch this space for more announcements.

**[www.ExitInternational.net](http://www.ExitInternational.net)**