

## **Towards a culture of life**

### **Béatrice Van Dorsser, Nurse, CICIAMS**

During the Corona pandemic, Belgium and the Netherlands had opposite reactions.

In Belgium, the government is putting the brakes on the hospitalisation of the elderly, while health workers and families are fighting for their lives. For example: a hospital in Liège was taken to court for refusing access to a 91-year-old mother.

In the Netherlands, it is the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health who insist on saving the lives of elderly and frail people. We were proud that 104, 101 and 107 year olds were cured.

Because there was a risk that there would be a shortage of Intensive Care beds (five times less per capita than in Germany), family doctors phoned their elderly patients to dissuade them from going to hospital if (it is) necessary. Just before that, oh miracle, some older people told their doctors that they wanted to be hospitalised and treated curatively.

In Dutch society, a difference is clearly visible: on the one hand in the statement: "the elderly ... are just dried up wood", on the other hand in a creativity to help and try to make the Elderly, despite everything, happy. Whether it is by fixing a pulley on Grandmother's balcony, to send her dinner or making the mother suffering from dementia laugh by offering her puppet shows in front of the nursing home window.

Light is shed on real filial love and real social bonds.

The BBC and Dutch TV reports on Swedish care homes where the elderly receive morphine instead of oxygen may be turning the culture of death on its head.