

# Murder hunt as euthanasia pioneer dies

The Netherlands

Adam Sage

Police have opened a murder inquiry into the death of the former Health Minister credited with making the Netherlands the first country in the world to legalise euthanasia.

A police spokeswoman said that Els Borst, 81, who was found dead in the garage of her home in Bilthoven, a suburb of Utrecht, on Monday, appeared to have been killed. "Based on forensic tests and findings at the scene, the conclusion can be drawn that the most likely cause of death was a crime," a statement read.

Mrs Borst promoted pioneering legislation in 2002 that gave Dutch people suffering a terminal illness the right to end their own lives. Several thousand have taken up the option every year.

She served twice as Deputy Prime Minister in Labour governments headed by Wim Kok.

A friend discovered her body at her home two days after she had attended a meeting of her centre-right party, Democrats 66.

Police said she had suffered a fatal injury, but initially claimed they were unable to determine whether the cause was a crime or an accident. One theory is that Mrs Borst was killed after disturbing burglars; another is that the murder was politically motivated.

She was also the architect of legislation that made foetal tissue from abortions or miscarriages available to medical research.

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