

# World Bulletin

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## France approves 'deep sleep' for terminally ill

French doctors have been given new powers to place terminally ill patients in a "deep sleep" until they die, under legislation approved by MPs yesterday.

France legalised "passive euthanasia" in 2005, where treatment needed to maintain life is withheld or withdrawn, but the government has refused to go further and allow full euthanasia, or assisted suicide, despite polls that showed substantial public support. The new measures will allow doctors to combine passive euthanasia with "deep and continuous sedation" - described as "sleep before death to avoid suffering" by Jean Leonetti, who proposed the new law.

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