



**EUTHANASIA IN THE CONTEMPORARY LEGAL DISCOURSE:
THE RIGHT TO DIE WITH DIGNITY**

Lecture by Violeta Beširević, Professor of Law

Should euthanasia be legalized, is there a right to die, who controls the machines – physicians or patients, and what are the dying conditions, are the issues that polarized contemporary societies. Soon after the initial fascination with the achievements of the modern medicine had passed, it became clear that the new technology did not only prolong life but the illness as well, and thereby, suffering and pains. As a consequence, a traditional dilemma regarding legality of euthanasia, perceived as “good” or “easy” death, has been reintroduced on the public agenda in the form of the right to die with dignity issue. A debate on euthanasia resulted in a deconstruction of its definition and in legal asymmetry under which some forms of euthanasia have been legalized while some remained beyond the law. In the light of comparative law, the lecture deals with modern trends in defining euthanasia, the right to die with dignity, its legal sources and paradigms for the legalization.

Violeta Beširević holds an L.L.M. and an S.J.D. in Comparative Constitutional Law from the Central European University, Legal Studies Department. Currently, she is a Professor of Law at Union University Law School Belgrade and also serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the European Public Law Organization and a Research Associate at the CEU Center for Ethics and Law in Biomedicine. She was a visiting scholar at the NYU School of Law, the George Washington University Law School, the Brigham Young University Law School, U.S. and at the Asser Institute in The Hague. In 2012, professor Beširević was awarded Fulbright stipend. She was a Global Research Fellow (2012-2013) at the NYU School of Law. Violeta Beširević works in the field of human rights law, bioethics, comparative constitutional law, and international criminal law. Among many publications, she authored the book *Euthanasia: Legal Principles and Policy Choices* (Florence: European Press Academic Publishing, 2006) and the article: *End-of-Life Care in XXI Century: Advance Directives in Universal Rights Discourse*, (2010), 24 *Bioethics* 3 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.), pp. 105-112, which is among the top five most read articles on *Bioethics* website since 2010.