

European court to rule on right-to-die case

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Europe's human rights court will on June 5 rule on whether a man in a vegetative state can be taken off life support, a case that has ignited a fierce euthanasia debate in France, a spokesman said Thursday.

Vincent Lambert, 38, who was left severely brain damaged and quadriplegic as a result of a 2008 [road accident](#), has for months been at the centre of a judicial tug-of-war over his right to die.

His 33-year-old wife, who like him is a psychiatric nurse, said he would never have wanted to be kept alive artificially, and that she wanted to "let him go".

The legal drama began in January 2014, when Lambert's doctors, backed by his wife and six of his eight siblings, decided to stop the intravenous food and water keeping him alive in line with a 2005 passive euthanasia law in France.

But his deeply religious Catholic parents took the case to the European Court of Human Rights, after the French supreme administrative court, known as the State Council, ruled that the decision to withdraw care from a man with no hope of recovery was lawful.

His mother says Lambert "is not at the end of his life, he is handicapped".

Jean Paillot, the lawyer representing Lambert's parents, says the case is significant because the ruling can impact "some 1,700 others in France"

suffering a similar health condition.

The European court will deliver its final ruling on the case at 11:00 am (0900 GMT) on June 5, the spokesman told AFP.

Assisted suicide is legal in Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg as well as in the US states of Vermont, Oregon and Washington.

In 2013, a British court rejected an appeal by a paralysed road accident victim and the relatives of a man who died after suffering locked-in syndrome for the right to [euthanasia](#).

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