

**From:**  
**To:** [Community Affairs Committee \(SEN\)](#)  
**Subject:** Supporting argument - Thalidomide Group Australia.  
**Date:** Thursday, 14 February 2019 3:40:38 PM

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## SENATE INQUIRY - Support for Australian Thalidomide survivors.

Dear Secretariat,

Please find below a link to new information from Belgium. The link has been translated to an English version and also included.

This information further supports what other worldwide governments are developing and implementing for their survivors of Thalidomide. Interestingly, this article outlines the recognition and intended compensation for surviving parents, along with survivors themselves.

Could this email please be shared with the Committee for their awareness and consideration.

Thank you.

[https://www.lalibre.be/actu/belgique/maggie-de-block-tient-parole-soixante-ans-apres-5-millions-d-euros-pour-les-victimes-du-softenon-5c6436967b50a60724980a9b?fbclid=IwAR36tdDNluMNp8MgUn3dJ9QIbgoQERrV7\\_cJL2lXwM6AwYp\\_WunbRJoIdM](https://www.lalibre.be/actu/belgique/maggie-de-block-tient-parole-soixante-ans-apres-5-millions-d-euros-pour-les-victimes-du-softenon-5c6436967b50a60724980a9b?fbclid=IwAR36tdDNluMNp8MgUn3dJ9QIbgoQERrV7_cJL2lXwM6AwYp_WunbRJoIdM)

### ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Maggie De Block keeps her word: sixty years later, 5 million euros for the victims of Softenon...30,000 euros for each parent still alive, 125,000 euros for those born and live victims of this drug.

Maggie De Block creates a fund to help victims of thalidomide, the drug of the late 1950s and early 1960s known as Softenon, causing serious malformations in dozens of children in Belgium. According to our information, confirmed by his spokesperson Florent Baudewyns, the Minister of Social Affairs and Health is setting up this mechanism that will compensate, for the first time since the scandal, sixty years ago. , the people concerned.

The text will be presented, again in this legislature, before the May elections. Maggie De Block (Open Vld), introduced her bill today to victims of thalidomide. The minister is laying the groundwork for a solution that these people have been waiting for for so many years. "The situation of these people is deeply affecting me, they have been fighting for so many years, and the creation of a thalidomide relief fund has been promised by my predecessor. We had a solution at the end of November, but political circumstances made it difficult to implement, and for the victims, the story could not be repeated," explains Maggie De Block. "I really hope that the victims can find some relief and that the planned intervention will provide them with the support they expected."

A budget solution was found despite current affairs. The minister confirms her willingness to intervene for those concerned. After this meeting, the draft bill must be approved by the council of ministers and then by the parliament.

Specifically, the project currently provides for: a closed envelope of five million euros for one hand, to grant an intervention of 125,000 €(single lump sum) to the 'direct' victims;

secondly, after two years, grant the rest of the subsidy envelope to the non-profit organizations supporting thalidomide victims. Then, an intervention of 30.000 € per parent still alive in the case where the victim herself died. This last measure represents a gesture towards mothers who have been exposed to this danger without knowing it.

These sums are obviously exempt from taxes and will not affect the granting of any other allowances. In order to facilitate the request by the victims, the project provides for a quick and efficient process, without any additional medical examination. Decisions will be based on existing evidence. Victims will have two years to apply, Florent Baudewyns tells us.

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Sent from my iPhone