Dear Sir,

On behalf of the Council of the European Society for Organ Transplantation, we would like to ask your attention for the following.

The European Society for Organ Transplantation is the official organisation covering the field of organ and cell transplantation in Europe. It includes professionals involved in the problems of donation and transplantation, such as transplant surgeons, physicians, immunologists, coordinators and basic scientists.

It is the policy of our society to represent these professionals and the respective organisations under the umbrella of the European Society for Organ Transplantation (ESOT). Within the structure of ESOT, a better coordination of efforts on behalf of the transplant patient and the transplant community are facilitated while the identity of the individual professional group remains intact and visible. Examples of this policy are the integration of the European Liver and Intestine Transplantation Association (ELITA), the European Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation (ESHLT) and the recently founded European Pancreas and Islet Transplantation Association (EPITA). Apart from these societies other fields in transplantation as renal transplantation and cellular transplantation are represented on the council-level of ESOT.

One of the goals of our society is to pursue and expand high quality education for members as well as for young clinicians and researchers entering the field of transplantation. In this respect an Educational Programme has been established offering courses such as an introductory course as the Hesperis Course that is held two times a year in different locations throughout Europe, the European Transplant Fellow Workshop, an annual event which is hosted by different transplant centers, the European Donor Surgery Masterclass in Leiden to promote quality and best practice in organ donation techniques and preservation, the TOP Course on donation and transplantation organized by the transplant center in Rostock as well as an annual training for basic scientists with promising new laboratory techniques.

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Most of these courses are free of charge for young transplanters and currently funded by ESOT and pharmaceutical industries. Of importance to you is also that many former East European countries have actively joined ESOT in the past years. Especially for members residing in those countries, ESOT wishes to improve education and professional teaching skills.

In addition, ESOT has started to build a Basic Science Network in Europe to stimulate collaboration in research and exchange of knowledge between transplant laboratories and groups. Another aim of our society is to assure quality and to promote standardization of transplantation procedures and programmes. Therefore, our society is preparing a system of accreditation for solid organ transplantation programmes and defines certifications of professionals in the field of transplantation in Europe, in close collaboration with the UEMS.

As political decisions are shifting from a national towards the European level, ESOT is interested in close cooperation and offers the expertise of its membership to European bodies, such as the EU Commission.

For the past years the EU Commission has been involved in donation and transplantation. With respect to this general interest as well as to the specific open consultation which is currently organized by you, the Council of the European Society for Organ Transplantation would like to draw your attention towards our activities aiming at an enhancement and enforcement of scientific and organizational aspects in donation and transplantation in Europe.

The Council considers it crucial that the European transplant community is able to develop and maintain its own specific and independent view and objectives in transplantation. Despite the fact that Europe is not organized in a federal way as e.g. the United States, which complicates the formulation of international collaboration, we have now reached as ESOT a position which is recognized in the international transplant community. It is of importance that this position is supported by European bodies such as the EU Commission.

The Council of ESOT would like to inform you about its current activities and objectives in donation and transplantation in Europe. As a consequence and to allow a better collaboration we would be happy to organize a meeting between representatives on behalf of the EU Commission and a delegation on behalf of the Council of the European Society for Organ Transplantation.

We look forward to a hopefully positive decision to further discuss the objectives in transplantation in Europe.

On behalf of the Council of the European Society for Organ Transplantation, sincerely yours,

Prof. Dr. Rutger J. Ploeg, Secretary General