

Council Conclusions on Organ donation and transplantation

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Communication from the Commission on "Organ donation and transplantation: Policy actions at EU level" (COM(2007) 275 final),

1. RECALLS that Article 152 of the Treaty requires that the European Parliament and the Council adopt measures setting high standards of quality and safety of organs of human origin, and that these measures must not prevent any Member State from maintaining or introducing more stringent protective measures; the same Article states that the Community shall encourage cooperation between the Member States in the areas referred to in that Article and, if necessary, lend support to their action.
2. TAKES NOTE of the Commission Communication on "Organ donation and transplantation: Policy actions at EU level", which provides a clear and coherent overview of the situation with regard to organ donation and transplantation at the European level and proposes future policy actions and priorities.
3. ACKNOWLEDGES that organ transplantation is a cost-effective treatment that has brought immense benefits to hundreds of thousands of patients over the past 50 years.
4. CONSIDERS that organ donation and transplantation are sensitive and complex issues that raise important ethical considerations, which require the full participation of civil society for their development.

5. RECOGNISES the importance of having high standards in respect to the quality and safety of organs for transplantation, in order to ensure a high level of protection for patients throughout Europe.
6. RECOGNISES that the severe shortage of organ donors remains the main challenge that EU Member States face with regard to organ transplantation and that there are large differences between the Member States in terms of their success in increasing donation rates.
7. STRESSES that in order to ensure quality and safety given current shortages of organs, adequate risk assessments that take into account both the characteristics of the organ and the conditions of the recipient are valuable. The combination of efforts between Member States for the evaluation of post transplant results would contribute to the safer and more effective use of donated organs.
8. RECOGNISES the importance of having adequate national transplant systems in order to ensure quality and safety and to increase donation rates. These systems need an appropriate legal framework, a good technical approach and organisational support.
9. ACKNOWLEDGES that sharing best practices, best models and expertise across EU Member States has already proved useful in increasing organ donor rates in some countries. Identifying those elements in the different systems that could be promoted at Community level will offer Member States further opportunities to improve national organ donation rates.
10. RECOGNISES that there are situations in transplant medicine, such as the treatment of urgent patients and difficult-to-treat patients (e.g. children and highly sensitised patients), that cannot be adequately addressed in small Member States with a limited donor pool and could clearly benefit from European cooperation.

11. INVITES the Member States to:

- Promote and enhance the performance of transplantation systems;
- Collect information on transplant medicine that would be helpful for designing and monitoring efficient policies;
- Exchange best practices and experience on organ donation and transplantation.

12 INVITES the European Commission to:

- Continue its work under the proposed action plan aimed at increasing the availability of donor organs and, in consultation with the Member States, to continue its examination of the need for an EU framework on quality and safety for human organs taking into consideration the specificities of organ transplantation and the work carried out by the Council of Europe;
- Coordinate, promote and strengthen the cooperation between the Member States on organ donation and transplantation on the basis of agreed objectives and priorities.

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