

PIECES FROM EUROPE
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Death penalty, nuclear plants and ... Europe's replies

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Question: Is it true that there are waiting lists in the whole of Europe for organ donation and transplants and that there are still no completely harmonised rules?

Elvira Strada

Reply: The European Commission has recently conducted a workshop on the harmonisation of standards for organ donation and transplants. In the 27 countries of the European Union, 9 604 people donated organs in 2011, compared to 9 206 in 2010 and 9 152 in 2009. The number of people who donate organs has increased slightly, but there remains much to be done. For this reason - to raise awareness amongst all citizens - the European Commission organised a workshop which included a presentation of current European cooperation projects. In 2011, for example, 18 712 kidneys and 7 006 livers were donated by living donors. Deceased donors subsequently died from either brain death or cardiac arrest. The European country which has the highest percentage of donors is Austria, with 42.9 kidneys donated from deceased persons [per million inhabitants]. In Italy in 2011 there were 1 325 deceased organ donors; the figure was 1 667 in Spain, 1 630 in France and 1 200 in Germany. The European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers is in fact working for better harmonisation of the organ donation process and for better protection of citizens through [sharing of experience between different countries, for a] fair management of waiting lists.

[added by the European Commission in the English translation]