

## The good news

**When it comes to transplantation, there is strength in 'EU-nity'**



### **RACE AGAINST TIME.**

**Organs are transported quickly, often by helicopter or aeroplane.**

## Organs without borders

**The Commission's action plan aims to improve the transplant systems throughout Europe. Italy is a key figure, but Spain sets the standard.**

**18.8**

Average number of donors per million inhabitants in the EU. There are marked differences between countries and Spain comes top with a figure of 35.6.

Increasing the availability of organs, making transplant management systems more efficient and ensuring greater safety for patients across the EU. These are the objectives that Europe intends to meet by 2015 through a detailed action plan, which makes provision for the exchange of expertise and cooperation. For all countries, Spain sets the example. After introducing a system of professionals dedicated exclusively to managing transplants, it is ranked top with 35.6 donors per million inhabitants, compared to an EU average of 18.8 (Italy has 22). It is estimated that if the Spanish model was applied across Europe, it could save the lives of at least 20 000 inhabitants per year.

**EXCHANGES** The European plans also make provision for closer integration of national systems to improve the overall quality of services. In this context, the Foedus project coordinated by the Italian National Transplant Centre aims to promote exchanges so that organs which are unusable in the country of origin can be used elsewhere. Associations such as Eurotransplant, Scandiarttransplant and the Southern Alliance for Transplants already carry out similar work in Europe. There are also bilateral agreements, for example between Italy and Malta. However, in 2010, less than half the countries offered their unusable organs to other countries.

**Margherita Fronte**