

Dialling 112 can save lives

Interview with Tonio Borg, EU Commissioner for Health

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- **12 October was the European Day for Organ Donation and Transplantation. What lesson from that occasion would you like to pass on to the residents of Lublin?**
- Above all I would have expected greater involvement in this issue from local organisations and local government bodies, which should be as close to people and their problems as possible. Organ donation allows us to save lives, but in order for this to be understood it is necessary for local organisations and local government bodies to organise meetings at which it is possible not only to discover best practices but also, primarily, to listen to the testimony of people who are alive thanks to transplants. Around 60 000 people in the EU are waiting for new organs, but many of them will die without having the chance for a new life.
- **On Sunday, Lublin hosted the National Emergency Medical Services Day celebrations. Why did you decide to accept the invitation to our city?**
- My presence here is proof positive that the EU appreciates the efforts of health workers, and in particular those who work round the clock to rescue accident victims. It happens from time to time that a proverbial one-minute delay means that someone dies, leading to criticism from the general public and the media. These cases are the exception, however, and I can assure you that we appreciate the efforts of workers in the medical emergency services. Through my presence here, in Poland and in Lublin, I am sending an important signal to the whole EU by stressing once again that Europe-wide knowledge of the 112 phone number can save lives.
- **Even before coming to Lublin you knew a lot about our city. What are your impressions of your visit?**
- Lublin is a wonderful city that successfully fought against both fascism and communism. It's a city with heart and vision, in which the late Archbishop Józef Zyciński and Father Karol Wojtyła, the future Pope John Paul II, played an important role. It's following the right path to the future and I'm glad to have been able to come.