

# Twelve Europeans die each day waiting for a donor

## Bulgaria rises from bottom of league table of organs donated for transplant

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Over 63 000 Europeans were on transplant waiting lists at the end of 2013. In other words, 508 out of every million EU residents were in need of an organ transplant. Every day, 12 Europeans die waiting for a life-saving transplant operation. In 2013, over 4 100 EU residents died while waiting in vain for a transplant, according to figures presented by the European Commission at its fifth Journalist Workshop on Organ Donation and Transplantation.

In Bulgaria, 934 people were on a waiting list for an organ transplant at the end of November [2014]. Of that number, 853 were in need of a new kidney.

Across Europe, the number of deceased donors averages 20 per million of population (pmp). In 2013, Bulgaria occupied one of the lowest positions in this ranking, with 2.9 deceased donors pmp. And when the forum took into account data from previous years, it identified our country as the EU Member State with the lowest donation rate. It should be noted, however, that while the rate was just 2 pmp in 2012, it reached 10 in 2013 and has stood at 21 since the beginning of this year. Thanks to humanitarian gestures by the relatives of brain-dead patients, over 65 transplants have been performed in Bulgaria so far in 2014. A further 15 transplants have been carried out from living donors. Whereas for the whole of 2012 a total of 19 transplants took place, predominantly from living donors, the figure this year stands at 79, mainly from deceased donors, according to figures provided by the Bulgarian Executive Agency for Transplantation at the request of *DUMA*.

Although the numbers were still insufficient, the EU recorded 33% growth in donorship over the period 2004-2013, the number of *living* donors rising by 86% and that of *deceased* ones by 18%. Whereas a total of 26 340 transplants were carried out in EU Member States in 2004, the figure for 2013 was 31 165. Spain remains Europe's leader in the field of organ transplants. Last year, 54.4 kidney transplants pmp were carried out in that country. In Bulgaria the figure was 3.9 pmp - ten times fewer than in Turkey and four times fewer than in Romania. For 2010 alone, France saved 80 000 euros in haemodialysis costs thanks to kidney transplants performed there. The oldest kidney donor in Belgium to date was 90.

The forum highlighted the great importance attaching to the role of organ donation coordinators. These are doctors who liaise between the families of brain-dead patients and the medical teams carrying out organ transplants. The key role of coordinators was also underlined by Dr Rafael Matesanz, director of Spain's National Transplant Organisation. That country's organ donation and transplantation reform, focusing on the involvement of coordinators, has yielded a 130% increase in donorship in ten years. Greece has seen a similar reform, leading to 132% donorship growth over the period 2001-2005. In Romania, donorship doubled between 2011 and 2013.