

By Wolfgang Wagner, Austria Press Agency Vienna

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### **Organ transplants: Austria leading the field**

Sub-headline: Experts: Where organ donations are high, transplant rates are also high

Brussels (APA) – Patients whose conditions could be resolved through an organ donation have better prospects in Austria than in other countries. For example, in 2007 Austria came top of 25 countries in the registration of patients for transplants, according to Axel Rahmel, a cardiologist and specialist at Eurotransplant, speaking at an EU workshop on Tuesday.

Eurotransplant (comprising the Benelux countries, Austria, Germany, Slovenia and Croatia) acts as a cooperation platform - including for the exchange of donated organs - and observes and analyses the situation. Rahmel points to figures from 2007. At that time, Austria led a group of 25 European countries with more than 90 patients lined up for a transplant per million inhabitants.

According to Rahmel, "Experience shows time and again that, if you have high levels of organ donation, you also have high transplant rates and many patients intended for them. (...) But, every day in Europe, at least ten people die on the waiting list. And that is just the tip of the iceberg."

Patients for whom a transplant would be appropriate would obviously not even be considered for them if the system were too weak or the likelihood of an organ being sourced were too low. As well as Austria, France, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland all had more than 80 patients in line for a transplant per million inhabitants. Countries such as Sweden, Portugal and Germany were ranked towards the middle of the group with around 60 per million, and countries with fewer than 40 patients per million inhabitants, such as Hungary, Greece, Romania and the Baltic States of Latvia and Lithuania, brought up the rear.

It has, however, been proven for some time that organ transplants not only dramatically improve quality of life but, in many cases, also greatly increase life expectancy. Rahmel: "A sixty-year-old diabetic with kidney failure has a life expectancy of four years. With a new kidney, this increases to nine years. A twenty-year-old diabetic with kidney failure has a life expectancy of nine years, increasing to sixteen years with an organ donation."

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