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Spain's organ donation rates are an example for the rest of Europe

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Rafael Matesanz, Director of the National Transplant Organisation (ONT), discussed the situation regarding organ donation in Spain at the journalist workshop on Organ Donation and Transplantation in Brussels, which was organised by the European Commission. Matesanz pointed out that the transplantation of just six organs gives the recipients over 55 years of life, and said that he felt it was 'essential for the transplant coordinator to talk to the family of the deceased in order for them to agree to donation. I feel that publicity campaigns have limited cost-effectiveness and we should focus our efforts on communication, with a 24-hour phone line manned by staff trained in specific areas and with regular meetings with the media'. This was a reference to the annual conferences organised in **Zaragoza** to raise journalists' awareness of the problem. According to the director of the ONT 'it is essential to liaise with the media'. In **Brussels** he advocated 'the promotion of a positive attitude towards organ donation along one international line of action'. Matesanz feels that the other 26 EU Member States should strive to attain the same donation rates as Spain. This would lead to the transplantation of more than 8 000 organs. 'The key factors are organisation and ensuring that organ donation rates across Europe do not range from 34.3 per million population to, for example, 1.5 per million population'.

The ONT's operating system was praised during this workshop, in which heads of transplant organisations from Portugal, Sweden and Belgium participated.