

Organ donation and transplantation in Croatia and the EU

The video available under: <http://www.rtl.hr/video/vijesti/39838/hrvatska-prva-po-broju-darivatelja-i-transplantacija/>

Below, the English version from the TV reportage prepared by Matea Damjanović for RTL Croatia, broadcasted in the newsprogramme RTL Danas on Saturday 12 October 2013, European Organ Donation Day for 2013

Vesna for the last twenty, and Zdravko for the last nine years happily live their lives since they both received new kidneys after years of dialysis.

VESNA ŠILIĆ RASTIĆ, Zagreb

‘It was 20 years ago, on the 1 st of April. Despite the date, it wasn’t a joke - it was for real. Since then, everything has been perfect.’

ZDRAVKO KRČMAR, Čakovec

‘You can’t make it without the help of your families. After the transplant my life changed 100 percent.’

Croatia is still the leader in Europe in terms of the number of donors and transplantations. With 123 (organ and tissue) donors in the first nine months of 2013, a new record was made. Thanks to these donors, 166 kidneys, 92 livers, 24 hearts and 4 pancreas were transplanted.

MIRELA BUŠIĆ, national transplantation coordinator in the Ministry of health of Croatia

‘Today, Croatia is well known worldwide as a model of very good transplantation practices and of solidarity between its people.’

It is precisely this type of generosity that was shown by Lia, from Belgium. After the tragic death of her eight year daughter, 14 years ago, she decided to donate her organs.

LIA VAN KEMPEN, Belgium

‘For me personally, it was not hard decision because the night before we got the diagnosis of brain death. I had already thought about organ donation, because I felt that I had to let her go and I put myself in the place of people who have a sick child who could only be helped by a new organ. If my Kelly could have helped in that way I would be overjoyed.’

In European Union waiting lists for transplantations are rising. Ten people die every day awaiting transplants.

AXEL RAHMEL, medical director of Eurotransplant

‘If donation rates were as high as in Croatia and in Belgium in all countries, I think we would already be very able to help our population. Unfortunately in many countries we do not have high donation rates as seen in Croatia – a shining example in organ donation and transplantation at this moment.’

LIA VAN KEMPEN, Belgium

‘I am just happy that Kelly’s death hasn’t been for nothing. We would never have Kelly back, because she was dead, and the only positive thing to come out of this whole experience was that she could help other children. I am so glad thanks to Kelly, other parents have been able to keep their child. I had to let mine go, but I am just happy for other people because if I hadn't made the decision my grief would not have been less. Losing a child is something you wouldn't wish on your worst enemy.’

These messages are sent today, on the European day of organ donations and transplantations.

VESNA ŠILIĆ RASTIĆ, Zagreb

‘It is very important because you give people a chance for a new life.’

And Croatia shows that its people love life.