

Resolution for a reformation of the blood-, bone marrow- and organ donation process

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Our Health-Care-System is sadly no longer able to fit the needs of our society. In 2015, 14.560 people waited for an organ transplantation; only 7.677 got one. In Luxembourg, there are in average 65 patients each year waiting for an organ transplantation, even if two-third will get one, only 4-9 organs are actually donated from Luxembourg (2009-2013). On top of that, a law was passed in Luxembourg forcing people willing to donate organs to have a donor card on them, which further hinders fast actions. An organ transplantation is a matter of life and death, one human dying every eight hours in Germany because of organ shortage. But not only do people die because of a lack of organs, but also because the trafficking of organs booms, depriving the poor people in need of one of their last opportunities to live.

Another point which needs urgent improvement is the donation of blood; although the Luxembourgish Red Cross could gain 933 new donors in 2015, 1253 were lost. To quote even more actual and disconcerting statistics; instead of the needed minimum of 440 blood conserves, the Red Cross could only manage to collect 300. Here again, one cannot stress enough the need of blood donation for the survival of crash victims, of people who need chemotherapies, of operated people, and so on, The list is long.

The last point I want to address today is the problematic of stem cell donation. Stem cell or bone marrow donations are an essential part in the cancer recovery process, as people suffering from a „disturbed“ bone marrow aren’t able to produce blood cells, often resulting in the death of the patients. However, taking the example of leukaemia, **80%** of the patients getting a transplantation of healthy bone marrow survive.

As seen in the introduction, those donations are extremely important for the survival of ill people, and still there is a non-negligible lack of all of those tissues.

ICs

- a) Seriously concerned by the fact, that in most European states, you need an organ donor card in order to get your organs removed immediately after your death and, if not possessing such a card, your family has to take the heavy decision whether or not to remove your organs, leading to a non-negligible loss of time, but time being a vital element in the process;
- b) Deeply disturbed that the actions of organ traffickers endanger the lives of the people who need their organs the most, and put the needs of the rich and unscrupulous in first place;

- c) Regretting the fact that up to 50% of the Luxembourgish families are against organ donation. Reasons for this high refusal rate are false prejudices/prejudges, misunderstandings or even due to a lack of interest / understanding;
- d) Deploring that at least half of the EU-citizens in need of an organ won't get one;
- e) Alarmed by the serious restrictions prolonged hospital stays, due to dialysis treatment, for example, have on the everyday life of the patients;
- f) Stressing the fact that alone in Luxembourg, we face a need of at least 130 more blood conserves to cover the minimum;
- g) Deeply concerned that more people are leaving the blood donations list than people are joining, leading to the aforementioned lack of transfusions;
- h) Putting the focus on the undeniable fact that blood transfusions are the last hope of severely injured crash victims, of people having an operation gone wrong, and many more;
- i) Seriously disturbed by the fact that even in some Eastern Europe countries, according to publications from the World Health Organisation (WHO), the screenings for HIV in transfusions are not sophisticated enough;
- j) Conscious of the problematic of gay men being excluded from the possibility to donate blood, due to their sexual preferences judged as potentially dangerous;
- k) Deeply regretting that we face today a lack of stem cell donations, essential in cancer treatment;
- l) Profoundly concerned that people, even if instructed about the life saving qualities of a stem cell donation, can still walk away and don't even let themselves be tested, without having to fear any consequences;
- m) Being aware of the fact that, in Luxembourg, a lot of CEO's don't propose a time-out for employees to donate blood;

OCs

1. Encourages the EU-wide adoption of a „non-donor card“ instead of a „donor card“; people being opposed to organ donations have to fill in a form stating that they don't want their organs removed in case of decease, contrary to the now current system of filling out a form if you want to donate organs.¹
 - a) Thus ensuring a well-stocked „supply“ of organs, the trafficking could be prevented, as the high demand could now be covered.
 - b) By executing this law, the people in need of organs could finally get one, without having to fear that it might be too late when the much-needed donation finally arrives.
 - c) Regarding the fact that most of the people in need if not all could now get a treatment, thus improving their everyday life drastically.
2. Asks for an information campaign with focus on schools to better inform the population and most importantly the Youth about the importance of those donations in order to raise the number of willing donors and ensure higher donation outcomes in the future.

¹ People without such a card *on them* at the time of their death will have their organs removed as fast as possible, as they have, according to the new law, agreed with this procedure.

3. Endorses the EU-wide or at least national implementation of a transitory² law stating that citizens aged 18 and adhering to the WHO guidelines of a blood donor's health, have to donate blood.³
4. Every citizen / blood donor will be prioritized to get his own blood donation or those of his family members, if needed for the maintenance of his own state of health.⁴
5. Strongly recommends the EU-wide implementation of screening guidelines for blood transfusions, ensuring the same safety standards all over Europe, thus granting the same chances of a healthy future to everyone.
6. Calls for the possibility for gay men to have access to blood donation centres, if their blood has been categorized as safe through testing.
7. Encourages the implementation of a law (preferential EU-wide) which states that citizens aged 18, and adhering to guidelines established below⁵, have to donate stem cells in order to ensure a stable and well replenished stock.^{6 7}
8. Strongly urges the government and/or the EU to;
 - a) At least prosecute people unwilling to donate blood and/or stem cells, or who don't even want to be tested, in life threatening situations because of non-assistance or even second-degree murder.⁸
 - b) If implementing these laws, sanction people unwilling to adhere to them according to the law of non-assistance.
9. Encourages the adoption of a law that forces CEO's to guarantee their employees a time-out of at least 4 hours so that they are able to donate blood.

Defense Speech/ Conclusion

You may say that this resolution violates the freedom of free choice. And I will be honest; in a certain way, it does. It hinders you to do whatever you want; it restricts your freedom, as you are forced to do something which you maybe wouldn't want to do. If you want to be really picky, it may even violate your right to freedom of religion, as some religious groups, notably

² This law is transitory, as it would only be in place until the process of blood donations has become a normality for a society and a special law concerning this problematic isn't necessary anymore. Sadly, this isn't the case in most of the countries, thus the need for such a law.

³ This measure would lead to a well replenished stock of blood transfusions and a decrease in deaths related to this kind of lack.

⁴ In case the citizen / blood donor gets involved in a serious accident where he needs to get a transfusion, he will get his own blood, thus ensuring a 100% compatibility.

⁵ <https://bethematch.org/support-the-cause/donate-bone-marrow/join-the-marrow-registry/medical-guidelines/>
https://www.psb.org/programs/marrow_guidelines.htm

⁶ Being conscious of the fact that it is extremely difficult to find the right donor outside of one's family, this law is NOT a guarantee for healing, but augments the chances significantly.

⁷ As already mentioned in OC³ footnote 4, the same principle is applied for stem cells; if the donor himself is ever in need, one has a reserve of his own stem cells or those from a family, thus ensuring a much higher chance of compatibility, as it is extremely rare to find a compatible, random donor.

⁸ This measure should only be employed if the government or EU decide against adopting the laws mentioned in the resolution.

„Jehova’s Witnesses“ oppose themselves to provide that kind of assistance. And I have to say that you are right. This resolution does all this. But if you think that this is reason enough to vote against this resolution, I’ll have to tell you some things. Because if you say that you strongly believe in the fundamental human rights, and that’s why you have to vote against it, you are a hypocrite. Already in the first draft of basic human rights, the French „Déclaration des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen“, Article 4 reads: „ Liberty consists of doing anything which does not harm others; thus, the exercise of the natural rights of each man has only those borders which assure other members of the society the enjoyment of these same rights.“ Or put more simple: „ Your freedom ends where the freedom of the other begins. “ And another, more recent example is Article 3 of the „Universal Declaration on Human Rights“: „ Everyone has the right to life [...] “

Dear GA, everyone has the right to live; everyone in this room, everyone outside on the street, every single human on our planet. It is one of the most important principles of our Democracy, of our society. Our life is the most precious “thing” we’ve got. But by refusing, voluntarily or not, people in need the treatment they need in order to stay alive, we deny those people this basic, fundamental right, this most precious gift of all.

This being said, it is our duty as healthy citizens to do everything we can to ensure that ill people can lead a more or less normal life.

And if you are still undecided whether or not to vote this resolution, let me say one last thing to you. You may be thinking that this stuff does in no way concern you, because you’re healthy, because you can lead a normal life and that all that talk about death and illness is for the others, you are wrong! Today, you may still be healthy, but illness or accident can strike you anywhere and anytime; who guarantees you that you won’t get hit by a car on the way home, and you’ll be desperately in need of a transfusion or a donated organ? No one can! This resolution does not solely concern the ones lying in a hospital bed, being grateful for every day they can live and see the people they love, but it concerns everyone in this room, in this city, in this country! It is an insurance for you and everyone, ensuring faster and more accurate treatment for everyone.

Dear GA, I hope that when you push the button on your remote, please think about the ones whose life depends on transfusions and donations, but also think about you, your future, and what this resolution could mean for it.