Action plan on organ donation and transplantation (2009-2015): strengthened cooperation between Member States

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The Commission presented a staff working document on the mid-term review of the Action Plan on Organ Donation and Transplantation (2009-2015).

State of play: more than **60 000 patients** are on a waiting list for an organ transplant in the European Union. Of these over 80% are waiting for a kidney, about 10% for a liver, and several thousands for other organs such as a heart or lungs. In 2012 more than 4 000 patients died in the EU while waiting for an organ.

Accordingly, in December 2008, the European Commission adopted the Action Plan on Organ Donation and Transplantation (2009-2015) which aimed at strengthening cooperation between Member States in this area.

This Action Plan aimed to tackle three main challenges in organ donation and transplantation:

- increasing organ availability,
- enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of transplant systems,
- improving quality and safety.

The Action Plan identified 10 key priority actions and 28 specific actions within a common framework. These actions are supported by EU funded projects under the Health Programme or other Community instruments such as research funding. Some were also taken forward by expert working groups organised by the Commission. **The ultimate responsibility for implementation remains of course with the Member States**.

Progress accomplished: this report on the mid-term review of the Action Plan is a factual progress report taking stock of progress made between 2009 and 2012, both at national and EU level. It also identifies gaps and topics that should be further addressed in the coming years.

This report is therefore not a revision of the Action Plan, but merely seeks to set out, from an EU perspective, where the emphasis of EU activities has lied in the past years and where the emphasis is intended to lie in the remaining period of the Action Plan (2014-15).

Overall, the report highlighted that good progress has been made by the Member States in the first half of the Action Plan. The most important achievements were made relating to the increase and training of transplant donor coordinators (PA1), the introduction or development of living donation programmes in some Member States (PA3) as well as the improvements of the organisational models (PA6).

Concretely:

- more coordinators were appointed and trained (PA1), thus improving deceased donation rates;
- living donation programmes were created or developed, seeking also for a better protection of living donors (PA3);

- organisational models that proved to be efficient in some Member States were introduced in other EU or non EU countries (PA6).

Many projects on these topics and practices received funding under the EU Health programme. For many other actions, national efforts and EU support have already provided Member States with a good knowledge base and tools.

While at some stage further EU funding could be foreseen, the emphasis for 2014-15 will lie on the implementation of these actions (for example on the evaluation of post-transplant results).

Three other Priority Actions:

1. facilitate the identification of organ donors across Europe and cross border donation;
2. the promotion of EU-wide agreements on aspects of transplantation medicine;
3. common accreditation system for organ donation/procurement and transplantation programmes;

are not foreseen for major new initiatives at EU level in 2014-15, because efforts are already undertaken by ongoing EU-funded Research projects and by other actors in the field, such as professional societies, the scientific community and other national and international institutions.