

Human blood and blood components: quality and safety for the collection, testing, processing, storage and distribution

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In accordance with Directive 2002/98/EC on setting standards relating to human blood and blood components, this report summarises the measures taken by the Member States to encourage voluntary unpaid donations and identifies the measures the Commission intends to take in order to promote self-sufficiency in the EU through voluntary unpaid donations. This is a comprehensive report examining and analysing in detail measures taken in the Member States.

Voluntary and unpaid donations: Voluntary unpaid donations have a long tradition in many of the EU Member States, notably France, Luxembourg, Northern Ireland, Slovenia, the former Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Denmark, the UK, Finland and the Netherlands. The report notes that interpretation of the principle of voluntary and unpaid donations varies across the Member States. This is illustrated in the level of expenses covered or time given off work to donate blood.

Promotion of voluntary unpaid blood donations: The promotion of voluntary unpaid blood donations is vital for donations to succeed. Activities vary and include publications such as guides or advertising to specific target groups and student awareness programmes. Events include “World Blood Donor Day”, which generated a lot of publicity. Student awareness campaigns have been developed in the UK, with Scotland designing an extensive school and university recruitment programme. Ireland produced an educational video and Latvia provided explanations on the processing of blood and donor requirements. The Report finds that different initiatives exist to promote the principle of voluntary and unpaid donations, using techniques as diverse as marketing actions, student programmes and e-initiatives. Some of the actions are related to the promotion of donations, others are more specific and relate to the promotion of unpaid donations. The Commission suggests there is a growing need to determine best practices.

Commission Action: The Commission will continue to encourage Member States to promote voluntary, unpaid donations. Under the Community Health Programme it will commission a European wide study to determine best practices for promoting voluntary and unpaid donations. Lastly, the Commission intends to continue discussions on EU blood donation self-sufficiency.