



RESOLUTION:

## **SOFT OPT OUT SYSTEM FOR ORGAN DONATION**

*Presented at the YEPP Council, Budapest, Hungary, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2016*

### **Recognising:**

- Organ donation is a lifesaving and a life transforming medical process which needs more publicity to ensure citizens are aware of how they can help.
- Over 63,000 people in Europe are on waiting lists for transplants<sup>1</sup>.
- Rate of refusal to donate by next of kin is high with rates as high as 60% in the Netherlands<sup>2</sup>.
- A soft opt system or opt out consent is a system that assumes consent unless the person has, while alive, registered his/her wish not to become an organ donor after death. It is proposed that, even though consent is deemed, the next of kin will in practice always be consulted prior to removing any organ. If the next of kin objects to the organ donation, the donation will not proceed<sup>3</sup>.

### **Acknowledging:**

- A system of opting out would greatly increase the number of donors and would reduce waiting times for patients on transplant lists.
- The main reason for the high rate of non-organ donation is due to the lack of an expressed wish from the deceased as well as family members being unsure of what their loved ones would have wanted.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/health/blood\\_tissues\\_organ/docs/ev\\_20141126\\_factsfigures\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/blood_tissues_organ/docs/ev_20141126_factsfigures_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20083476>

<sup>3</sup> <http://health.gov.ie/blog/policy/o/introducing-an-opt-out-system-of-consent-for-organ-donation/>

- The opt-in system is used by only a small minority of EU countries, and those which have changed to an opt-out system have seen significant increases in their rates of organ donation. Over a three year period after making the change to an opt-out system, Belgium saw its rate of organ donation increase by 100%, while over the same period, Singapore saw an increase of 700%<sup>4</sup>.
- Such a soft opt-out system must be supported by increased investment in essential infrastructure, transplant surgeons and trained support staff in order to function effectively.

**YEPP calls on:**

- The EU Member States to bring forward legislation for a policy of a soft opt-out system for organ donation, which means that in the event of the death of a person with viable organs, they will be considered as candidates for organ donation.
- The introduction of a clause in such legislation that allows for specific objection and refusal by next of kin.
- Member States to create and implement a transplant co-ordination network that works both locally and nationally, and improve the quality of public information available about organ donation, as per the Spanish Model of the opt out system.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://jerrybuttimer.ie/2014/03/25/opt-out-system-could-vastly-increase-organ-donation-buttimer/>