

## ELPAT, the European platform on ethical, legal and psychosocial aspects of organ transplantation

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The enormous organ shortage has brought transplant professionals to look for alternative opportunities to increase the number of organs for transplantation. To name a few: extended criteria donation, nonheart beating donation, living donation, paired exchange and list-exchange donation, Samaritan donation and stem cell technology. While new technologies and transplantation programmes emerge, questions about the ethical, legal and psychological implications of these developments become apparent. To accommodate European research on these aspects of organ transplantation, the ELPAT Platform was founded during the EU-supported congress *Organ Transplantation: Ethical, Legal and Psychosocial aspects. Towards a common European Policy*, which was held in Rotterdam last year. The aim of ELPAT is to facilitate the European research area in this field of science, and to bring continuity and progress in the dialogue on the complex issues of organ transplantation ethics. One of the ways to achieve this was the presentation of a 600-pages state-of-the-art handbook, reflecting the main discussion themes of the 2007 congress. The handbook represents the work of the most prominent scientists and policy makers in the field [1].

Since the last ESOT congress in Prague in 2007, ELPAT has been recognized by ESOT as an official body of ESOT. ESOT can appeal to ELPAT for consultation: if ESOT wishes advice on, or is contacted with regard to a specific ethical, legal or psychosocial dilemma, ESOT can consult ELPAT regarding these matters. ELPAT will then look within their registries to find the appropriate person or working group to advise ESOT. Within ELPAT, there are six expert working groups, each focusing on a specified theme. These six themes are as follows: *Deceased Donation*; *Legal Barriers for Organ Transplantation in Europe*; *Organ Tourism and Paid Donation*; *Psychological Care for Living Donors and their Recipients*; *Samaritan Donation and Subpopulations*. Each group will work on a deliverable, for example an article or a best practice proposal. Results from the working groups will be presented at the next ELPAT congress, which will take place from April 18–21, 2010 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

It is a common aim of ESOT and ELPAT to inform transplant professionals on recent developments in the field of ethical, legal and psychosocial aspects in the field of organ transplantation. In case you have a question regarding these aspects of transplantation, please feel free to contact us via our website: <http://www.elpat.org>. These questions may concern topics such as living donor evaluation, information about starting innovative transplant programs, or individual cases. Furthermore, during each bi-annual ESOT congress a special ELPAT session will be organized. Following the success of the first joint ESOT-ELPAT session *Organ Tourism in Europe*, at the last ESOT congress in Prague, ELPAT will also organise a session during the next ESOT congress in Paris, in 2009. This session is titled *Living Unrelated Organ Donation – From Caring Partner to Good Samaritan*. We look forward to welcome you at this session in Paris, and at our 2010 congress!

For more information about these meetings, and about the consultation services of ELPAT, you can visit our website at: <http://www.elpat.org>.

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### Reference

1. Weimar W, Bos M, Busschbach J, Eds. *Organ Transplantation: Ethical, Legal, and Psychosocial Aspects. Towards a common European Policy*. Lengerich, Germany: PABST Science publishers, 2008. ISBN 978-3-89967-415-6.