



T +33(0)388412560

www.coe.int

pressunit@coe.int

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Santiago de Compostela to host a Council of Europe walk against organ trafficking

Strasbourg, 17.03.2015 – A walk against organ trafficking will be held on Tuesday 24 March on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela ([the Way of St James](#)), at the initiative of the Council of Europe Committee on Organ Transplantation. The walk will start at 3.30 p.m. from Mount of Joy to the Cathedral and be followed by a jubilee ceremony at 7.30 p.m.

Organised by the Council of Europe, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), the Spanish National Agency for Transplantation ([ONT](#)) and [Swiss Transplant](#), the event aims at pooling efforts to raise awareness of the fight against organ trafficking and promote voluntary and unpaid organ donation, which helps to save and improve the lives of thousands of patients throughout the world.

The Committee on Organ Transplantation (CD-P-TO), meeting on 23-24 March, will bring together over 80 internationally-recognised experts to discuss topics such as the fight against organ trafficking, international cooperation, the development of ethical, quality and safety standards and future projects.

The walk will take place on the day before the opening for signature (25 March) of the new Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs, which invites governments to criminalise the illicit removal of human organs, at an [international conference](#) (25-26 March).

Background:

Since 1987, the Council of Europe has contributed to the implementation of standards in the field of organ transplantation and human tissues and cells for human application, with the aim of protecting public health and guaranteeing respect for the most fundamental human rights.

The [CD-P-TO](#), in charge of these activities at the Council of Europe's European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines and HealthCare ([EDQM](#)), helps countries to improve their donation and transplantation services, assess the risks connected with procurement, storage and transplantation, address the causes of organs shortage and raise public and professional awareness. (see [fact sheet](#))

Some figures

In 2013, 17 020 people in Europe received a kidney transplant. However, over the course of the same year, an average of about 14 people per day died because of the shortage in organs (see [Transplant Newsletter 2014](#)).

In the late 1980s, Spain had a deceased donor rate of 14 donors per million inhabitants. In 2013, this rate increased to 35.5 donors per million inhabitants, the highest in the world. The rate increased following the implementation of a structured, proactive policy, profound organisational changes at the hospital, regional and national levels, and the development of effective quality assurance programmes.

Contacts :

[Estelle Steiner](#), Spokesperson/Press Officer, tel. +33 3 88 41 33 35

[Caroline Larsen-Letarnec](#), Head of Public Relations, EDQM, tel. +33 3 88 41 28 15