

Press release

## **A lack of available organs – raising awareness with a Europe-wide celebration**

*Bern, 31 August 2017* **Each week in Switzerland, two people die while on the waiting list for a new organ because a suitable donor organ could not be found for them. Against this backdrop, the Council of Europe has decided that the European Day for Organ Donation and Transplantation (EODD) 2017 is to be held in Switzerland. On 9 September 2017, all eyes will be on Switzerland. Together with the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), Swisstransplant is aiming to increase awareness and familiarity among the general public on the subject of organ donation. A huge celebration on the Bundesplatz in Bern on 9 September 2017 intends to raise awareness of organ and tissue donation.**

### **Ways to increase familiarity**

Organ donation and transplantations in Switzerland have undergone big developments and made impressive advances in a short time. Intensive care and emergency medical care specialists are indispensable when it comes to organ donation. The five donation networks in Switzerland exploit synergies and collaborate closely with Swisstransplant. "The high rate of refusal runs contrary to all these goals that we have achieved and the generally positive attitude of the general public", says PD Dr med. Franz F. Immer, Director of Swisstransplant. The Swiss Transplantation Act requires explicit consent from a donor and/or their relatives in order for organ donation to take place. Many people never even ask themselves the question of whether to become an organ donor, or they hesitate to make a decision or do not inform their next of kin of their decision. In the event of an emergency, relatives are then faced with the difficult question: What would the deceased person have wanted? Next of kin are often overwhelmed by the situation, both emotionally and rationally, and tend to oppose allowing organ donation. This is reflected in surveys carried out in intensive care units in Swiss hospitals, where medical professionals must hold these difficult conversations with the relatives of recently deceased persons.

### **A celebration with a message – across Switzerland, Europe and the world**

On 9 September 2017, we will be celebrating the European Day for Organ Donation and Transplantation (EODD) on the Bundesplatz in Bern. At the same time, Geneva will be marking the World Day for Organ Donation and Transplantation (WDODT) as part of the 2017 Organ Donation Congress, while the Swiss National Day for Organ Donation will also fall on the same date. This will be the first time that parallel events are held in one country to celebrate all three days. At the EODD, Swisstransplant is aiming to raise awareness and increase familiarity among the general public on the subject of organ donation. Together with medical professionals from Swiss hospitals, the FOPH, organ transplant recipients and relatives of donors, we would like to convey to the public how important this decision is, and how important it is to share this decision with your next of kin. The celebrations on the Bundesplatz in Bern are sure to be great fun as well. There will be live performances from the TAKE THIS Swiss allstars band with Nemo, Damian Lynn, Leduc (of Lo & Leduc), Adrian Stern and Lovebugs. The well-known comedian and radio presenter Stefan Büsser will host the proceedings.

### **Will we convince 100,000 people to make up their minds?**

Our live ticker on the website [www.eodd2017.ch](http://www.eodd2017.ch) has been keeping count how many people have taken the decision so far and obtained a donor card, either by ordering one and printing it out or by downloading one to the Medical ID app. On 9 September 2017, we will check the total – we hope that over around three months, 100,000 people will have signed up.

### **Mini-documentaries featuring people affected by organ donation and raising public awareness**

A series of mini-documentaries take us through the personal significance of organ donation for those on the donor register, organ recipients and their relatives, intensive care physicians and a transplant surgeon. Running this social-media campaign prior to the EODD, we want to raise awareness of organ donation and try and address any doubts that people may have about this issue. The national organ donation campaign, "Let's talk about organ donation", is also set to remain in the public eye this autumn. The FOPH, together with Swisstransplant, is keen to continue actively raising awareness of organ donation among the general public. At the heart of this campaign will be three new TV adverts in which family members discuss their decision to become organ donors in a range of everyday situations, such as at a yoga class, through virtual reality or while watching television.

### **Programme for the European Day for Organ Donation and Transplantation (EODD), 9 September 2017, Bundesplatz, Bern**

- 4.00 p.m. Welcome address: Alec von Graffenried, Mayor of Bern, Pierre-Yves Maillard, President of Swisstransplant, Pascal Strupler, Director of the FOPH
- 4.20 p.m. Fly-past by the Swiss Air Force PC-7 TEAM
- 4.40 p.m. Expression of thanks to the organ donors and their relatives with the SWISS TEAM from the 2017 World Transplant Games
- 5.00 p.m. TAKE THIS Swiss allstars band concert with Nemo, Damian Lynn, Leduc (of Lo & Leduc) and Adrian Stern
- 7.00 p.m. Lovebugs concert
- 8.00 p.m. Music with the DJs Cisco & Pow

Stefan Büsser, comedian and radio presenter, will host the proceedings.

Other attractions: information stands, street food, a flight simulator, an ambulance of AAA Alpine Air Ambulance AG and a photo corner.

Come and see us at the information stand on the Bundesplatz – we would be delighted to answer your questions. Upon request, we can also arrange interviews with PD Dr med. Franz F. Immer, Director of Swisstransplant; Pascal Strupler, Director of the FOPH; and people affected by organ donation and medical professionals from the hospitals.

Downloads (mini-documentaries, video statements, logos, programme flyers) and materials: [www.eodd2017.ch](http://www.eodd2017.ch)  
Link to the adverts from the "Let's talk about organ donation" campaign: [www.leben-ist-teilen.ch](http://www.leben-ist-teilen.ch)

### **Contact for media enquiries:**

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### **Swisstransplant – the Swiss National Foundation for Organ Donation and Transplantation**

Swisstransplant organizes all organ allocation activities at a national level on behalf of the Swiss cantons and cooperates with similar organizations outside of Switzerland. As the National Foundation for Organ Donation and Transplantation, it has been tasked by the Swiss government with the allocation of organs to recipients in accordance with the applicable law. Swisstransplant is also in charge of maintaining the waiting list of organ recipients. For more information visit [www.swisstransplant.org](http://www.swisstransplant.org).