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EKHA program on transplantation will be hosted on EU Commission's Health Policy Platform

The EKHA project "Improving Organ Donation and Transplantation in the EU" will be launched on the European Commission's Health Policy Platform in 2019, an interactive tool to boost discussions about public health concerns and to share knowledge and best practices. Thus, transplantation, especially kidney transplantation and the lack of organs in the EU, will be in the focus of European healthcare discussions in 2019. "We hope that this builds bridges between the different policy areas and that we can achieve a sustainable improvement for patients on the waiting list", explains ERA-EDTA president Professor Carmine Zoccali.

Every year, the European Commission's Health Policy Platform hosts three thematic networks, led by stakeholders. The underlying idea of the platform is to ease communication between European Commission services and health stakeholders. The chosen networks have the ultimate aim of producing a joint statement which are essentially policy recommendations to the Commission.

For the first time, an EKHA ("European Kidney Health Alliance") programme has been shortlisted and voted for. One of the members of this alliance of non-profit organisations representing key stakeholders in kidney health issues is the "European Renal Association – European Dialysis and Transplant Association" (ERA-EDTA). The programme that made it onto the European Commission's Health Policy Platform is called "Improving Organ Donation and Transplantation in the EU", and its aim is to improve Europe-wide access to kidney transplantation – the best renal replacement therapy, also from the medical perspective. However, there are barriers which limit the extent to which transplantation is used. The shortage of organs, especially, remains a devastating obstacle in the EU.

"EKHA proposed a thematic network which will bring together a broad group of stakeholders in the field of organ donation and transplantation to share best practices and support solutions to address main challenges faced by member states: how to increase organ availability, enhancing the efficiency and accessibility of transplant systems and improving quality and safety", explains EKHA chairman, Professor Raymond Vanholder (Belgium).

ERA-EDTA is very proud that many stakeholders voted for this topic, although all the competing projects were strong and innovative, too. "This poll result clearly shows that the shortage of organs and the long waiting lists for transplantation in many European countries are generally perceived as a huge societal issue", says ERA-EDTA president Professor Carmine Zoccali. "People expect the EU government to provide solutions and to pave the way so that the best medical renal replacement treatment is equally available in all European countries. We hope that the chosen program builds bridges between the different policy areas and that we can achieve a sustainable improvement for patients on the waiting list".

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About ERA-EDTA

With more than 11,000 members, the ERA-EDTA ("European Renal Association – European Dialysis and Transplant Association") is one of the biggest nephrology associations worldwide and one of the most important and prestigious European Medical Associations. It supports basic and clinical research in the fields of clinical nephrology, dialysis, renal transplantation and related subjects. It also supports a number of studies as well as research groups and has founded a special "Fellowship Programme" for young investigators as well as grant programmes. In order to involve young nephrologists in all its activities, ERA-EDTA has created the "Young Nephrologists' Platform" (YNP), a very active committee whose board includes members who are 40 years old or younger. In addition, it has established various working groups to promote the collaboration of nephrologists with other medical disciplines (e.g. cardiology, immunology). Furthermore, a "European Renal Best Practice" (ERBP) advisory board was established by the ERA-EDTA to draw up and publish guidelines and position statements. Another important goal of the ERA-EDTA is education: The series of CME courses combined with the annual congress offer an attractive scientific programme to cover the need for continuous medical education for doctors working in the fields of nephrology, dialysis and transplantation. The association's journals, NDT (Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation) and CKJ (Clinical Kidney Journal), are currently the leading nephrology journals in Europe; furthermore NDT-Educational is the Society's online educational journal, with free access for all users, as well as being a very important and useful feature of the NDT-Educational "Literature Review". The ERA-EDTA Registry is a large epidemiologic database comparing countries by assessing nephrology practices throughout Europe. ENP, the European Nephrology Portal, is the latest new initiative of ERA-EDTA, where all those interested in the activities of the Society can find everything that is happening, all in one place. Finally, ERA-EDTA is a member of the European Kidney Health Alliance (EKHA), a consortium of patients, nurses and foundations relating to renal issues that actively interacts with the European Parliament. For more information, please visit www.era-edta.org