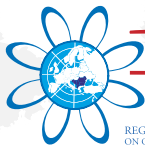




Ministry
of Health

For health. Together.



RHDC CROATIA

REGIONAL HEALTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER
ON ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANT MEDICINE

THE SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE HEALTH NETWORK REGIONAL HEALTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER on Organ Donation and Transplant Medicine Croatia

Accomplishments 2011-2013

Biannual report



*This **The SEEHN RHDC Croatia Accomplishments 2011-2013 Biannual Report** is published by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia/Institute for Transplantation and Biomedicine, which is a SEEHN Health Development Centre; it is not a publication of the SEEHN. The Ministry of Health is responsible for the views expressed in this Report, and the views do not necessarily represent the decisions or policies of the SEEHN.*

Publisher

Regional Health Development Center on Organ Donation and Transplant Medicine
Croatia (RHDC Croatia)
Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia, Institute for Transplantation and
Biomedicine
Zagreb, Ksaver 200a
Republic of Croatia

Contributors

Mirela Bušić, RHDC Croatia Director
Iva Vrančić, RHDC Project Coordinator
Lydia Raley, External Associate
Branka Malnar Grubišić, Psychologist
Milena Ivanković, PhD, Senior Adviser

Proofreading

Translation Agency START d.o.o., Zagreb, Croatia

Layout, design and print

vizual media, Zagreb, Croatia

Printed in 500 copies

The publication is also available electronically and can be downloaded at:

http://www.zdravlje.hr/programi_i_projekti/transplantacijski_program/regionalna_suradnja_rhdc
sehnsec.blogspot.com

Content

1. Introduction	04
2. About RHDC Croatia	05
2.1. Inauguration of Croatia as a Regional Health Development Center on Organ Donation and Transplant Medicine	05
2.2. Collaborative partners	05
2.3. Objectives	05
2.4. Methodology	06
3. Landmark events	07
3.1. Zagreb meeting	07
3.2. Skopje meeting	08
3.3. Ministerial Conference on Organ Donation and Transplantation “Heart to the Region - Beating towards Self-Sufficiency”	09
3.4. European Organ Donation Congress (ETCO-EDC) “Science needs a heart”	11
4. Training modules	12
4.1. Ohrid	12
4.2. Ljubljana	12
4.3. Ljubljana	12
4.4. Chişinău	13
4.5. Zagreb	13
5. Follow-up visits in support of country action plan implementation	15
5.1. ROMANIA	15
5.2. ALBANIA	16
5.3. BULGARIA	16
5.4. SERBIA	17
5.5. MONTENEGRO	18
5.6. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	18
5.7. ISRAEL	20
6. Major accomplishments	21
6.1. Launching deceased organ donation and transplant programme in Montenegro	21
6.2. Increasing the number of kidney transplants from living donors in the Republic of Macedonia	22
6.3. Revitalization of the liver transplant program in Serbia	22
6.4. Accomplishments per SEEHN country	23
7. Other activities	25
8. Acknowledgment	26

1. Introduction

The South-eastern Europe Health Network (SEEHN), established in 2001, is a multi-governmental forum for regional collaboration on health, health systems and public health. Nowadays, it comprises Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Israel, the Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and the Republic of Serbia.

The Memorandum of Understanding on the future of the SEE Health Network and regional cooperation in public health, signed by the SEEHN Ministers of Health in April 2009, outlined the importance of designation of Regional Health Development Centers and their role in the transformation of regional projects into long-term programmes of cooperation and development.

The Regional Health Development Centre on Organ Donation and Transplant Medicine, Croatia (RHDC Croatia) was established in 2011, to strengthen collaboration and cooperation within the South-eastern Europe countries in the field of deceased organ donation and transplantation, in line with the SEEHN and WHO basic principles.

The RHDC Croatia serves as a SEEHN technical body, e.g. as a centre for facilitating the dissemination and exchange of good practices, knowledge, expertise and experience in creating and implementing long-term sustainable and self-sufficient deceased organ donation (DD) and transplantation programmes.

2. About RHDC Croatia

2.1. Inauguration of Regional Health Development Centre on Organ Donation and Transplant Medicine in Croatia

The Regional Health Development Centre on Organ Donation and Transplant Medicine is the designated technical body of the SEEHN, officially inaugurated in February 2011 by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia, as its integral part under the Institute for Transplantation and Biomedicine.

2.2. Collaborative partners

From the outset, the designation and inauguration of the Centre has been internationally recognized and welcomed. This important regional Initiative has been strongly supported by the most relevant, leading international societies and organizations that are providing scientific and technical guidance, as well as direct support for the regional training programmes and development activities; The Transplantation Society (TTS), the European Society for Organ Transplantation (ESOT), the European Transplant Coordinators Organization/European Donation Committee (EDTCO), the International Society for Organ Donation and Procurement (ISODP), World Health Organization, the European Council and the European Commission.

2.3. Objectives

The RHDC Croatia provides sustained leadership in implementing concerted actions in the Region, aimed at the development of successful and self-sufficient organ donation and transplantation programmes through promotion, advocacy, publications, research, policy development, collaboration and technical assistance in this highly specific field of public health.

The main objectives of the collaboration are agreed on and defined by the ministers of health of the SEEHN member states;

- Raising public awareness on organ donation,
- Promotion of human rights, ethical standards and principles and standards on safety and quality related to organ donation and transplantation, in line with WHO, CoE, EU and SEEHN basic principles,
- Support to the development of efficient (self-sufficient) organ donation and transplantation systems,
- Exchange of best practice and design a model for international cooperation in the field of organ donation and transplantation.

2.4. Methodology

Technical assistance is primarily provided through different types of collaborative actions and training activities according to the RHDC Croatia Annual Work Plan and SEEHN country specific Action Plan;

- Regular meetings and on-going collaboration with National Focal Points (NFPs),
- Tailoring policies to meet country-specific needs,
- Multi-country workshops,
- Expert missions in support of Action Plan implementation,
- Exchange of data, research and knowledge,
- Bilateral agreements and twinning model of collaboration,
- Expert guidance and sustainable long-term commitment.

The networking within the Region is based on close collaboration with NFPs, as key RHDC liaison persons, appointed per each country by their competent authorities to enable regular reporting and data exchange systems.

3. Landmark events

3.1. Zagreb meeting (22 February 2011)

This was a landmark event at which major objectives of the SEEHN Initiative under the leadership of RDHC Croatia were presented. The focus of the Zagreb meeting was to bring together professionals and representatives of health authorities from the SEE Countries fostering interpersonal relationships, and supporting trust and commitment.



"Regional center has grown within the framework of strengthening regional cooperation between countries of South-eastern Europe in the field of organ donation and transplantation, and Croatia's position as the regional leader in the field of transplantation."

Zsuzsana Jakab,
WHO Regional Director

Pictures 1, 2, 3, 4: Inaugural meeting Zagreb, February 2011



Picture 5: Introduction of the regional network of National Focal Points

Major outcomes achieved:

- Network of National Focal Points as RDHC Croatia key liaison persons established,
- Tool for in-depth analysis and assessment of country-specific needs defined (Questionnaire),
- Expert scientific guidance and partnerships with international societies presented.

3.2. Skopje meeting (26-27 May 2011)

The Skopje meeting was jointly organized and guided by RHDC Croatia collaborating partners; TTS, ESOT, ETCO, ISODP, in support of regional professionals and SEEHN countries national health authorities to analyse country-specific needs reported in the Questionnaire.



Picture 6, 7, 8, 9, 10: Country delegations presenting data and discussing country-specific objectives

As a result of the Meeting, Country Action Plans have been designed and written by each country, identifying specific objectives and activities necessary to establish transplant programmes or increase deceased organ donation and transplant activities.



Picture 11: SEEHN member countries delegations and representatives of professional societies (ESOT, ISODP, ETCO, TTS)

3.3. Ministerial Conference on Organ Donation and Transplantation “Heart to the Region - Beating towards Self-Sufficiency” (Zagreb, 4 June 2012)

The **Ministerial Conference on Organ Donation and Transplantation** held in Zagreb, Croatia, has been organized under the Croatian Presidency of the 29th Meeting of the South-eastern Europe Health Network (SEEHN) to address the following specific goals:

1. National accountability in meeting the transplantation needs of their population,
2. Economic and ethical imperative on effective transplant programme implementation to advance the development of overall public health and socio-economic progress in the Region,
3. Exchange of good practices and successful models already existing in the Region.



Picture 12: SEEHN Member States Delegation

The ministers committed to supporting the implementation of the Action Plan in their respective countries, and to promote unique ethical principles and quality standards in organ donation and transplantation in the Region.



Picture 13: Hans Kluge (Director, Division of Health Systems and Public Health, WHO Regional Office, Marina Bera (Assistant Federal Minister of Health, BH), Mincho Vichev (Deputy Minister of Health of the Republic of Bulgaria), Amela Lolić (Assistant Minister of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Srpska), Miodrag Radunović (Minister of Health of Montenegro), Rajko Ostojić (Minister of Health of the Republic of Croatia), Maria Isabel de la Mata Barranco (Principal advisor with special interest in public health, DG SANCO-Health and Consumers-European Commission), Octavian Grama (Deputy Minister of Health, Moldova), Petar Bulat (Assistant Minister of Health, Serbia), Gantar Tomaž (Minister of Health of the Republic of Slovenia), Jovan Grpovski (State Advisor to the Minister of Health of Macedonia)



Picture 14: Opening ceremony

3.4. European Organ Donation Congress (ETCO-EDC) “Science needs a heart” (Dubrovnik, 5-7 October 2012)

A special session dedicated to the SEEHN Region organizational aspects of deceased donation was included in the ETCO-EDC congress programme. During the SEEHN Internal Session, Countries' Action Plans accomplishments were presented by National Focal Points.

The session on SEEHN Initiative presented a follow-up report on the deceased organ donation activities in the Region, guided by The Transplantation Society (TTS), WHO and ESOT/ETCO experts.



Picture 15, 16, 17, 18: ETCO-EDC Congress “Science needs a heart”

4. Training modules

Over 350 professionals from the Region have benefited from different training modules and educational meetings specifically tailored as per country-specific needs, presented in the Action Plan. These training modules, coordinated and tailored by RHDC Croatia in close collaboration with NFPs, have been greatly supported by financial contributions and expert guidance provided by the collaborating scientific organizations and partner institutions (TTS, EC TAIX).

4.1. Ohrid (21-22 June 2012)

Workshop on Technical Requirements for Donation and Procurement of Organs and Kidney Transplant Management in conjunction with the Nephrologist Congress (62 participants)

Picture 19:
Multi-country workshop on
Technical Requirements for
Donation and Procurement
of Organs and Kidney
Transplant Management



4.2. Ljubljana (15-17 March 2012)

Workshop on brain death diagnostics and Second Meeting of National Focal Points within SEEHN (44 participants)

4.3. Ljubljana (30 August - 1 September 2012)

Workshop on brain death diagnostics (36 participants)

Picture 20:
Workshop on brain death
diagnostics and Meeting of
National Focal Points
within SEEHN



These Workshops organized in close collaboration with Slovenia Transplant were geared towards a methodology of determining brain death and best practices in donor management combined with practical simulation in the Ljubljana University Medical Centre.

4.4. Chişinău (25-26 April 2013)

Workshop on Funding Models for Deceased Donation and Transplantation (84 participants)

Multi-Country Workshop on Funding Models for Deceased Donation and Transplantation was hosted and organized in collaboration with the Moldova Transplant Agency, in the context of the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova to SEEHN, within the framework of the TAIEX Instrument. The workshop presented overview of the funding models for deceased organ donation and transplantation programmes in the European countries. The reimbursement models for donor hospitals and organizational models were elaborated by different Competent Authorities.



Picture 21, 22: Workshop on Funding Models for Deceased Donation and Transplantation and Meeting of National Focal Points within SEEHN

4.5. Zagreb (17-18 July 2013)

Workshop on Deceased Donation and Transplantation (130 participants)

The multi-country workshop in Zagreb interfaced health care professionals from all SEEHN member states for education in proactive organ donor detection systems in hospitals. The workshop provided training in donation process at the hospital level, with an emphasis on early detection and identification of potential donors, and brain death determination. National Focal Points presented deceased donation programmes in selected pilot hospitals and their remarkable results, making their efforts visible. The main difficulties in administration as well as in staff funding in donor hospitals were pointed out.

Several remarks and recommendations were emphasized:

- Potential overlapping of different on-going projects (Accord, BSA, SEEHN) in some of the SEEHN countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova) requires better multi-project coordination
- Working Alliance Group presented plan for concerted action on projects implementation in the SEEHN countries

- Uneven practice in brain death determination call for global harmonization
- Sustainable support of health authorities to the Country Action Plan implementation regardless of political changes is strongly recommended



Picture 23: Country delegations and NFPs



Picture 24: Discussion with religious leaders



Picture 25: Reportage of the Romanian journalist Adriana Stere about successes in transplant medicine in Romania



Picture 26: Marija Jovanovski-Srceva, Maria Gicheva, Maryana Doitchinova-Simeonova, Efstratios Chatzixiros, Marta López-Fraga



Picture 27: Let's work together initiative

5. Follow-up visits in support of country action plan implementation

In a two-year period (2012-2013) several follow-up visits to the national health authorities of the SEEHN countries were jointly organized by the RHDC Croatia and The Transplantation Society (TTS), strengthening accountability and commitment in supporting the development of deceased organ donation and transplantation programmes in the Region. The goal of these visits was to follow up and facilitate the implementation of country Action Plan on deceased organ donation and transplantation that is consistent with the requirements of EU directives and WHO guiding principles.

As a result of these visits a set of recommended actions has been issued;

5.1. ROMANIA

Recommended Actions:

- strengthening the commitment of the Ministry of Health to support country development of deceased donation and transplantation programmes
- legislation stipulates payment for transplant professionals and Ministerial support is needed to be influential that subsequent legislation consider the essential role of the National Transplant Agency, as the Competent Authority of Romania, and assure the payment for professionals involved in organ donation and transplantation activities



Picture 28: Meeting with the Romanian Minister of Health

5.2. ALBANIA

Recommended Actions:

- Establish a National Transplantation competent authority
- Appoint the director of the agency/institution who shall be responsible for coordination of the transplantation system
- Prepare the necessary legal framework
- Develop an IT system for:
 - National waiting list management
 - Organ donor registry management
- Other functions (as defined by transplant legislation):
 1. Regulation on brain death determination and its implementation in the ICU clinical practice
 2. Identification of key donation personnel in each hospital (transplant center, University centers or regional)
 3. Training of intensive care doctors, key donation personnel, procurement and transplantation teams
 4. Public campaign on organ donations, headed by the MoH, with hospital resources, NGOs, other line ministries, including all media outlets
 5. Plan for further collaboration with SEEHN RHDC Croatia



Picture 29: Meeting with the Minister of Health of the Republic of Albania: Francis Delmonico, Vjollca Duro, Mirela Busic, Vangjel Tavo, Romeo Zegali

5.3. BULGARIA

Recommended Actions:

- Hospital managers should be accountable to the Bulgarian Executive Agency for Transplantation (BEAT) regarding organ donation performance
- Hospitals should establish an Organ Donation Committee (which would include a director of the clinical center, head of intensive care unit, in-house transplant coordinator, and the Agency)

- Legislation on brain death should be amended to constitute determination of death regardless of family perceptions
- The role and payment of transplant coordinators should be defined by the BEAT
- Harmonization of ICU practice with regard to brain death determination should be supported by the Professional Society of Intensive Care Medicine
- Study visit of Bulgarian experts and professionals to Croatian Competent Authority and transplantation centers in April in Zagreb



Picture 30:
Mirela Busic, Mincho Vichev (Deputy Minister of Health), Francis Delmonico



Picture 31:
Meeting at the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Bulgaria

5.4 SERBIA

Recommended Actions:

- Ministerial support of Serbia-Transplant to be fully operational through:
 1. appropriate number of staff
 2. acquisition of an IT system
 3. development of national waiting list, organ donor/transplantation registry, and national allocation system
- Hospital managers accountable to the Ministry of Health regarding organ donation performance
- Hospitals should establish an Organ Donation Committee (which would include a director of the clinical center, head of intensive care unit, in-house transplant coordinator, and transplant coordinator from Serbia-Transplant)



Picture 32: Meeting at the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia

Picture 33:
Zoran Radovanovic, Darko Mirkovic, Nenad Milojcic, Mirela Busic, Francis Delmonico, Berislav Vekic, Dana Mihailovic, Sasa Zivic

5.5. MONTENEGRO



Picture 34:
Zoran Jovancevic, Mirjana Djuranovic, Gorica Savovic, Mira Jovanovski Dasic, Mirela Basic, Minister Miodrag Radunovic, Marina Ratkovic, Francis Delmonico, Dragana Ostojic, Danilo Radunovic

Recommended Actions:

- Amendments of the 2009 Transplant Law to enable donation coordinator to approach families of the deceased and request organ donation;
- Specific regulation consistent with the 2009 Law to enable the development of a national kidney waiting list;
- The appointment by the Ministry of Health of a National Coordinator before the end of October 2013;
- The appointment by the Ministry of Health of an Organ Donation Coordinator before the end of October 2013;
- HLA laboratory should be established based upon an assessment of budget, equipment and staff;
- Bilateral agreement with Croatia for heart and liver transplantation services to be provided for patients from Montenegro.

5.6 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Picture 35: Zlatko Cardaklija, Midhat Haracic, Aida Pilav, Pasan Sehovic, Lada Sarajlic, Zeljko Ler, Mirela Basic, Minister Rusmir Mesihovic, Francis Delmonico, Goran Cerkez, Marina Bera, Novka Agic, Safet Omerovic

Recommended Actions:

- To establish a Competent Authority (Center for Transplantation) within the Federal Ministry of Health, fully operational (24/7), staffed and with an IT system for central coordination of organ transplantation throughout the Federation;
- To propose the appointment of Dr Lada Sarajlić as the Director of the Competent Authority;
- To develop a waiting list of patients for organ transplants within the Federation;
- To appoint key donation personnel and transplant coordinators in 12 hospitals of the Federation;
- In collaboration with Croatia, to provide training for transplant coordinators from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to the Federation Ministry's training plan;
- To convene regular meetings with hospital directors to review the data from each hospital reporting possible, potential, eligible, actual, and utilized brain dead donors (consistent with the WHO Critical Pathway);
- To coordinate and strengthen cooperation between transplant centers (Tuzla and Sarajevo) to standardize/harmonize best practices;
- To facilitate the process of European Federation for Immunogenetics accreditation in Tissue Typing Laboratories in Sarajevo and Tuzla;
- To initiate preparation for Eurotransplant membership for the Federation, with a parallel plan for the membership including the Republic of Srpska and the District of Brčko.

Another meeting was subsequently convened at the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Several recommendations were issued:

- Strengthening cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Regional Health Center for Development of donor programmes and transplantation medicine (RHDC Croatia/ SEEHN);
- To consider the recommendations of the Federation to establish a Central Competent Authority to standardize practices amongst the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Srpska and the District of Brčko;
- To recommend to the Minister of Civil Affairs the establishment of a single Competent Authority under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Civil Affairs to oversee the practice of organ donation and transplantation at the country level of Bosnia with agreement derived from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Srpska and the District of Brčko.

5.7. ISRAEL

The follow-up visit to Israel in December 2013 led to an interesting discussion with the experts from the Ministry of Health and Israeli Transplant Centre, which resulted in a set of recommendations.

Israeli colleagues expressed their interest in collaboration on developing a paired kidney donation system throughout the SEE Health Network.

For the SEEHN collaboration to succeed, there is first a need to verify the following:

- The availability of tissue laboratories in each country capable of performing a virtual crossmatch;
- Examine the level of social and cultural acceptance of living donation in each country;
- Examine the mutual acceptance of the kidney procurement professional practices in each country;
- Examine the availability of suitable flight arrangements and kidney preservation machines.



Picture 36: Mirela Busic, Ronni Gamzu, Francis Delmonico, Tamar Ashkenazi, Jacob Lavee

6. Major accomplishments

6.1. Launching deceased organ donation and transplant programme in Montenegro

Resulting from regional development cooperation, the transplant program of Montenegro was initiated in September 2012; in close cooperation between the transplant team from Clinical Hospital Centre Zagreb and Clinical Centre Crna Gora, the first two kidney transplants (from living related donors) were performed.

This historical achievement is incentive to continue collaborative work in advancing the newly established Montenegrin transplant programme and focusing on deceased donation as future priority.

In December 2013, in cooperation with Croatian transplantation teams and with Croatian technical support, the first multiorgan deceased donation was performed at Clinical Centre Crna Gora in Podgorica. Organs were successfully allocated via ET allocation system.



Picture 37, 38, 39: The first living related kidney transplantation in Montenegro

The operations were performed at the University Hospital Montenegro under the supervision of Professor Marina Ratković, nephrologist, who has been spearheading transplantation efforts in the country and leading the newly established Montenegrin kidney transplant team.



Picture 40: Mirjana Djuranovic, Mirela Busic, Marina Ratkovic, Mira Dasic, Lydia Raley

6.2. Increasing the number of kidney transplants from living donors in the Republic of Macedonia

Living donor kidney transplant was launched in the Republic of Macedonia in 1976. Fifteen (15) deceased kidney transplants were performed in the period from 1987-1989, and the last two in 2006. Following the Action Plan presented at the first SEEHN RHDC Croatia Skopje meeting, there has been a significant increase in the number of living kidney transplants (24 successfully performed in 2012, and 35 transplantations in 2013). A deceased donor program needs to be re-established in the next year.

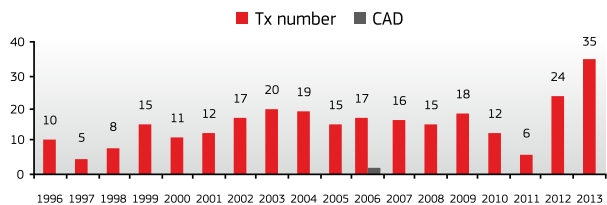


Table 1. Number of kidney transplantations per year in the period from 1996 - December 2013
Abbreviations: CAD - Cadaveric

6.3. Revitalization of the liver transplant programme in Serbia

In June 2013 in close cooperation between Clinical Hospital Merkur (Zagreb) and Clinical Hospital Centre Serbia liver transplant programme in Serbia has been revitalized; two liver transplants were successfully performed in Belgrade.



Picture 41: Serbian Health Minister Slavica Djukic Dejanovic and Croatian Health Minister Rajko Ostojic signed Memorandum of cooperation in health

6.4. Accomplishments per SEEHN country

Albania

- Bilateral Agreement between Albanian and Turkish Ministry of Health in developing the transplant programme (Living kidney transplantation)
- Education provided in collaboration within RHDC Croatia (5 professionals)

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

- National Coordinating Authority (Centre for transplantation within Federal Ministry of Health) established; expected to be fully operational in April 2014
- Legislation harmonized
- Transplant coordinators appointed in 3 Clinical centers and 10 County hospitals
- Education provided in collaboration within RHDC Croatia (13 professionals)

Republika Srpska

- Waiting list - in preparation
- Transplant Coordinators appointed in 9 hospitals;
- National Transplant Coordinator nominated
- Four living kidney transplantations performed in 2013
- Education provided in collaboration within RHDC Croatia (5 professionals)

Bulgaria

- Legislation fully harmonized with EU Directive 2010/53
- Training courses for coordinators organized (4 courses annually)
- Education provided in collaboration within RHDC Croatia (9 professionals)
- Media campaign successfully launched

Macedonia

- Significant increase in living kidney transplants (24 successfully performed in 2012, and 35 in 2013)
- In 2012 adoption of the presumed consent
- Twinning model between donor hospitals (University Clinical Centre Rijeka, Croatia and University Clinical Centre Skopje, Macedonia)
- Education provided in collaboration within RHDC Croatia (16 professionals)

Moldova

- The National Transplant Programme 2012-2016, approved by the Government in October 2012
- In December 2011 living kidney transplant programme launched (11 living kidney transplantations)

- First LLR transplantation performed on February 22nd 2013 (3 in total); in March 2013 cornea retrievals and transplantation started (46 cornea recipients)
- The first multi-tissue Bank authorized in January 2013
- The informational system "SIA TRANSPLANT" for monitoring the donation and transplantation of organs, tissue and cells launched in March 2013
- The three-year Cooperation Agreement between the Moldovan and Romanian National Transplant Agency, signed in 2011
- Education provided in collaboration within RHDC Croatia (6 professionals)

Montenegro

- Transplant programme (living kidney) launched in September 2012 under Croatian RHDC leadership (a historical event achieved in the Balkan Region under the Framework of the South Eastern Europe Health Network)
- Deceased donor programme successfully launched on 08th December 2013 in cooperation with Croatian teams. The first deceased organ donor has been realized in Podgorica. Organs have been successfully allocated via ET allocation system.
- Ten living kidney transplantation performed by the end of 2013
- Education provided in collaboration within RHDC Croatia (15 professionals)

Romania

- Key Donation Persons have been appointed in 35 donor hospitals
- Deceased donor rate doubled in 2013, from 3 to 6 donors per million people
- 100 liver transplantations from deceased donors performed in 2013
- Efficient media campaign increased public awareness of the importance of organ donation and transplantation
- Education provided in collaboration within RHDC Croatia (3 professionals)

Serbia

- Competent Authority for organs (Serbiatransplant) established in 2010, thus Deceased organ donation programme has been nationally guided and monitored since 2010
- Twinning agreement on liver transplant programme between Clinical Hospital "Merkur" and Clinical Centre of Serbia signed in 2013, resulted in revitalization of the liver transplant programme; two liver transplants were successfully performed
- Education provided in collaboration within RHDC Croatia (94 professionals)

7. Other activities

Action Plans - defined by each SEEHN country, identifying specific objectives necessary to establish or improve deceased donation and transplantation programmes within each country. The **“Action Plan Booklet”** represents the first comparative analysis and overview of current status and specific needs in the field of organ donation and transplantation in the SEE Region.

Collaborative research

The authoring of the SEEHN Brief - *“Current status of transplantation and organ donation in the Balkans - could it be improved through the South-eastern Europe Health Network (SEEHN) initiative?”* (Spasovski, Busic, & Raley, 2012) valuable publication provided the first official data on donation and transplant activities throughout the Balkans region, increasing the visibility of SEEHN.

Meetings and Networking - two regular meetings per year have been agreed upon for submitting updates on Action Plan implementation status in countries. These meetings have been critical in establishing trust, personal relationships and ongoing communication among regional professionals, helping to overcome cultural and economic differences.

Bilateral cooperation - several agreements on cooperation have been signed between Croatia and SEEHN countries (Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), for specific technical assistance in supporting the development of deceased organ donation or transplantation programmes.

Data management - data exchange platform has been successfully established providing database of regional donation and transplantation activities allowing for improvement of regional data visibility.

National Focal Points Network established facilitating regional communication and inter-country implementations of the country Action Plans. These personal relationships and close collaboration with NFPs has greatly contributed to creating a common mind set of working together in the spirit of goodwill and friendship.

Education conducted thus far has been crucial to address the current lack of knowledge and organizational infrastructure facing regional professionals.

Mutual benefits of cooperation

The establishment of the regional network under RHDC leadership focusing on organ donation and transplantation medicine has already achieved improvements in quality and accessibility of health care services in the Region. The strengthening of cooperation among the ministries and professionals in this challenging area has resulted in visible and appreciated progress by citizens. The SEEHN Initiative brought a new paradigm which streamlines the donation and transplantation activities throughout the SEE Health Network member countries. By creating a team mindset, sharing ideas, and openly discussing strengths and weaknesses, the SEEHN RHDC Croatia undoubtedly succeeds in meeting the defined goals.

8. Acknowledgment

We would especially like to thank the South-eastern Europe Health Network Ministries of Health National Focal Points and collaborating country delegates for their valuable and constructive contribution to the SEEHN Initiative in the development of organ donation and transplantation programme under the RHDC Croatia leadership.

Dr Petro Mersini, NFP, Ministry of Health, Albania

Dr Vjollca Durro, Ministry of Health, Albania

Dr Pëllumb Piperi, Ministry of Health, Albania

Dr Lada Sarajlic, NFP, Federal Ministry of Health, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dr Andreja Subotic-Popovic, NFP, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dr Maria Gicheva, NFP, Executive Agency for Transplantation, Bulgaria

Dr Maryana Simeonova, Director of Executive Agency for Transplantation, Bulgaria

Dr Igor Codreanu, NFP, Director of Transplant Agency, Moldova

Dr Marina Ratkovic, NFP, Clinical Center of Montenegro

Dr Victor Zota, NFP, National Transplant Agency, Romania

Dr Carmen Pantis, Transplant Coordinator in Emergency County Hospital Oradea, Romania

Dr Mirjana Lausevic, NFP, Clinical Center of Serbia

Dr Nenad Milojicic, Director of Serbiatransplant

Dr Igor Nikolov, NFP, Medical Faculty Skopje, Macedonia

Dr Goce Spasovski, Medical Faculty Skopje, Macedonia

Ms Tamar Ashkenazi, NFP, Director of Israel Transplant Center

Dr Danica Avsec, Director of Slovenia Transplant, Slovenia

We would also like to express our gratitude to all collaborating organizations and societies, all the professionals, experts and delegates for their collaboration and exceptional contribution in making this Initiative possible. Their willingness to give their time and effort has been very much appreciated.

We are grateful to Professor Henrik Ekberg (1951-2012) who was a true leader in the international transplant community and whose work in the Region was enthusiastically received and greatly valued. Professor Ekberg was a truly exceptional colleague with a charismatic personality who is greatly missed and will always be remembered with great respect and affection.



A SECTION OF



The European Society
for Organ Transplantation

