



PRESS RELEASE

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Ethics Council rejects criticism of Opinion on organ shortages

The Chair of the German National Ethics Council (NER), Kristiane Weber-Hassemer, has today (Thursday) stated in Berlin that the criticism expressed in some quarters that the Council is advocating a presumed-consent system of the kind existing in other countries is totally unfounded.

“Our graduated model is in fact based on comprehensive information and assistance from State agencies, enabling people to declare whether they wish to opt in or out. The aim is to minimize the number of cases in which the wishes of the person concerned with regard to his or her organs are not clear. But there must also be provisions covering those who fail to make a declaration.”

In addition, the Opinion emphasizes the particular role of the relatives. “So no one need be afraid that organs will simply be taken from his or her body.”

“Some of those who reject our proposals seem not to have read the Opinion at all,” says Mrs Weber-Hassemer. “The Ethics Council believes that the shortage of organs is such a burning issue that a new approach is essential.”

The NER’s Chair stresses that the Opinion was adopted unanimously by the entire Council.

“It was precisely the concerns of the public, as well as its pronounced willingness to donate, that underlay the process of opinion formation in the Council,” Mrs Weber-Hassemer points out.

The German National Ethics Council

The German National Ethics Council’s task is to provide a forum for interdisciplinary discourse between the natural sciences, medicine, theology and philosophy, and the social and legal sciences.

It expresses views on ethical issues relating to new developments in the field of the life sciences and on their consequences for the individual and society.

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