



Voluntary Non-Remunerated Donors – Summary

Context

The European Commission calls upon Member States to take the necessary measures to encourage Voluntary Non Remunerated Donors (VNRD) (or VUD, Voluntary Unpaid Donation, as called in the Directive). The Directive 2002/98/EC endorses the Council of Europe^{1,2} VNRD definition:

Donation is considered voluntary and non-remunerated if the person gives blood, plasma [...] of his or her own free will and receives no payment for it, either in the form of cash or in kind which could be considered a substitute for money. This would include time off work other than that reasonably needed for the donation and travel. Small tokens, refreshments and reimbursements of direct travel costs are compatible with voluntary, non-remunerated donation.

But there is variance in how European Member states implement VNRD/VUD³.

Issues

EBA is a strong supporter of VNRD, both for labile components, for plasma for fractionation and for plasma derived medicinal products, as payment of donors could have negative consequences:

1. Blood safety

Science has shown remunerated blood donors to have a higher risk of blood-borne infectious diseases than voluntary non remunerated donors⁴. Until viral inactivation is available for all types of components, collecting components from VNRD will remain a key safety measure besides donor screening.

2. Ethical acceptability for donors

Payment of donors goes against protection of the donor's dignity, and the prohibition of making the human body and its parts as such a source of financial gain has been strongly encouraged also by the Council of Europe⁵ and EU Member States.

3. Sustainable blood supply

The development of commercial plasma collection centres using paid donors erodes the voluntary donor base and might jeopardize the sustainability of the blood supply. In countries where unpaid and paid

¹ Directive 2002/98/EC, 2003

² Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, Recommendation No. R (95) 14 on the protection of health of donors and recipients in the area of blood transfusion, 1995

³ [Comission staff working document on the implementation of the principle of voluntary and unpaid donation for human blood and blood components, SWD\(2016\) 130 final, 2016](#)

⁴ Van der Poel CL et al, Vox Sang, 2002; 83: 285–293.

⁵ European Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, 1997 (“Oviedo Convention”).

