

Every Organ Counts

The Role of Second Opinion in Optimizing Organ Transplantation in Austria

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Implementation of a Second Opinion System since 2017

- In times of low organ donor availability, it is especially critical to thoroughly evaluate whether an organ is suitable for transplantation before deciding against reporting the potential donor or specific organs to Eurotransplant due to concerns about organ quality.
- In Austria, a second opinion system was established in 2017 and has since been integrated into the online tool used for documenting donor protocols.
- Data from 2024 were analysed to assess the implementation and potential impact of the second opinion process on increasing organ transplant rates.

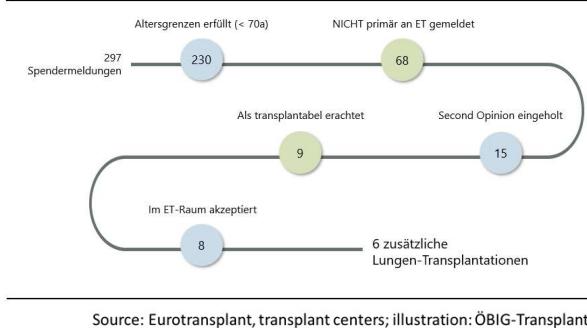
Figure 1: Transplant activity in Austria 2015-2024
* Figures compared to 2023



Source: Eurotransplant, transplant centers; illustration: ÖBIG-Transplant

Additional organs for transplantation have been identified

Figure 2: Second opinion process in 2024 using the example of lung organs



Source: Eurotransplant, transplant centers; illustration: ÖBIG-Transplant

- The findings indicate that, in most cases, organs are primarily reported to Eurotransplant.
- When organs are not reported, the designated exclusion reasons outlined in the protocol are usually cited. In some instances, alternative medical justifications are provided for non-reporting. Nonetheless, in 2024, the second opinion process led to the identification of (a small number of) additional transplantable organs.
- The second opinion process is also partially reviewed during audits of transplant centres.

Outcome of transplantations is assessed annually

- Obtaining a second opinion is a valuable tool in enabling extended criteria donations. The procedure has become standard practice in Austrian transplant coordination centres.
- Given the limited number of available donors, each additional organ is vital to ensure timely transplantation for patients on the waiting list. Routine documentation of second opinions ensures the process is consistently followed.
- When additional organs are transplanted as a result, outcomes are favourable in the majority of cases.

Fig. 3: Additional organs through second opinions 2017–2024

	Heart	Lung	Kidney	Liver	Sum
2017		1		2	3
2018	4	2	2	3	11
2019		6	2	2	10
2020	5	3		1	9
2021	1	6	2	1	10
2022	4	8		2	14
2023	1	5		1	7
2024	1	6			7
Total	16	37	6	12	71

Source: Eurotransplant, transplant centers; illustration: ÖBIG-Transplant

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