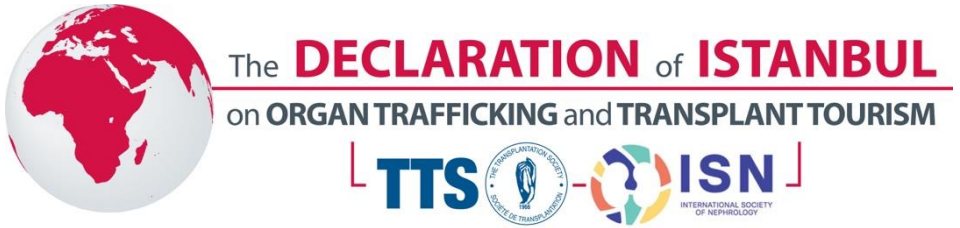
Update Declaration of Istanbul Custodian Group

Thomas Mueller
Co-Chair* Declaration of Istanbul Custodian Group (**DICG**)

Community of Parties
to the Council of Europe Convention against trafficking in human organs
Santiago de Compostela Committee
Online Meeting, Oct 20-21, 2026



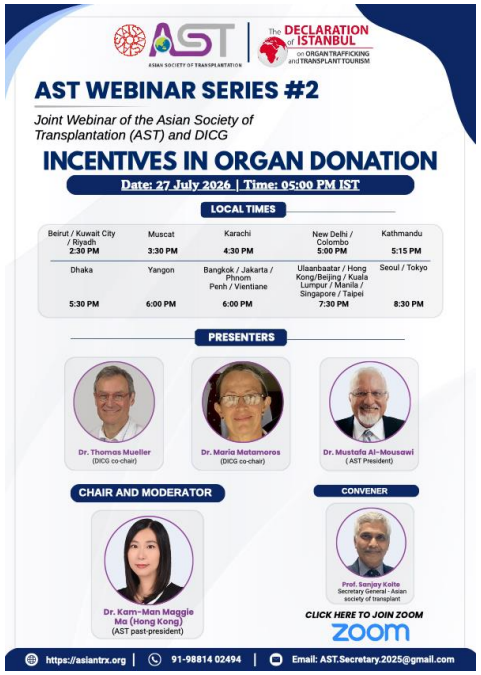
Organ trafficking and transplant tourism

- **Prosecution**
  - Medlead
  - German/Swiss case(s)
  - CoE reporting
  - UK case(s)
  - India
  - Egypt
  - Over-regulation

- **Fake or reality**
  - China
  - Ukraine - Russia
  - Palestine – Israel
  - Migration
  - Conflicts and wars

Online Activities

- AST Asian Society of Transplantation (joint webinar on incentives Jul 2026)
- East Central Africa (webinar on post-transplant complications Jun 2026)
- World Day Against Trafficking In Persons (webinar on trafficking Jul 2026)

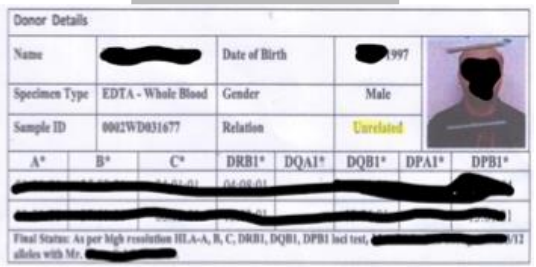




Kenya– India - Europe

2022

2026



Donor Details							
Name	[redacted]	Date of Birth	[redacted]997				
Specimen Type	EDTA - Whole Blood	Gender	Male				
Sample ID	0002WD031677	Relation	Unrelated				
A*	B*	C*	DRB1*	DQA1*	DQB1*	DPA1*	DPB1*
[redacted]							
[redacted]							
Final Status: As per high resolution HLA-A, B, C, DRB1, DQB1, DPB1 Incl test, [redacted]/12 alleles with Mr. [redacted]							

Israel NFP information

Medlead transplantation Website

(accessed June 01, 2026)



Transplant surgery	$ 250‘000	
…		…
…		…
Total		**$ 284‘250**

Spiegel report on organ trafficking
- 12th April 2025

A, B, C …



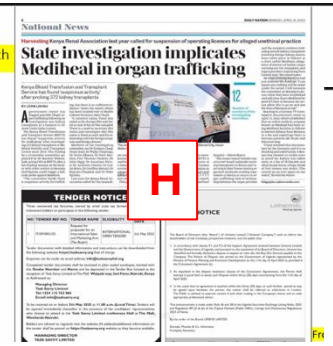
DW documentary exposes Mediheal – 12th April 2025







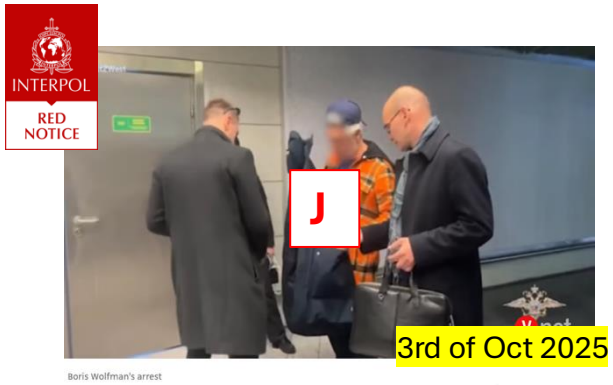
Monday April 14th 2025



17th April 2025



I



Boris Wolfman's arrest

3rd of Oct 2025

Mediheal Cleared of Organ Trafficking Claims as Health Committee Calls for Reforms



27th of Apr 2026

MedLead website closed
- Sep 2026



MEDLEAD – med-lead.d accessed Jan 29, 2025

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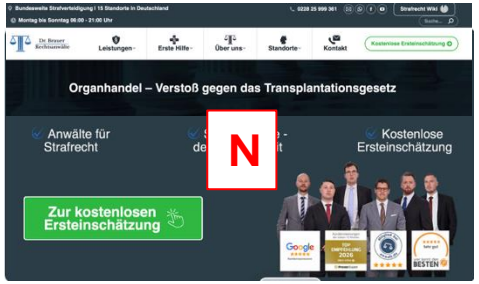
Transplant surgery $ 250‘000
Total $ 284‘250

Gericht sieht Organhandel
Niere in Kenia gekauft: Deutsche Patientin verurteilt
ZDF-Korrespond örg Brase
von Jörg Brase, 23.06.2026 | 21:43

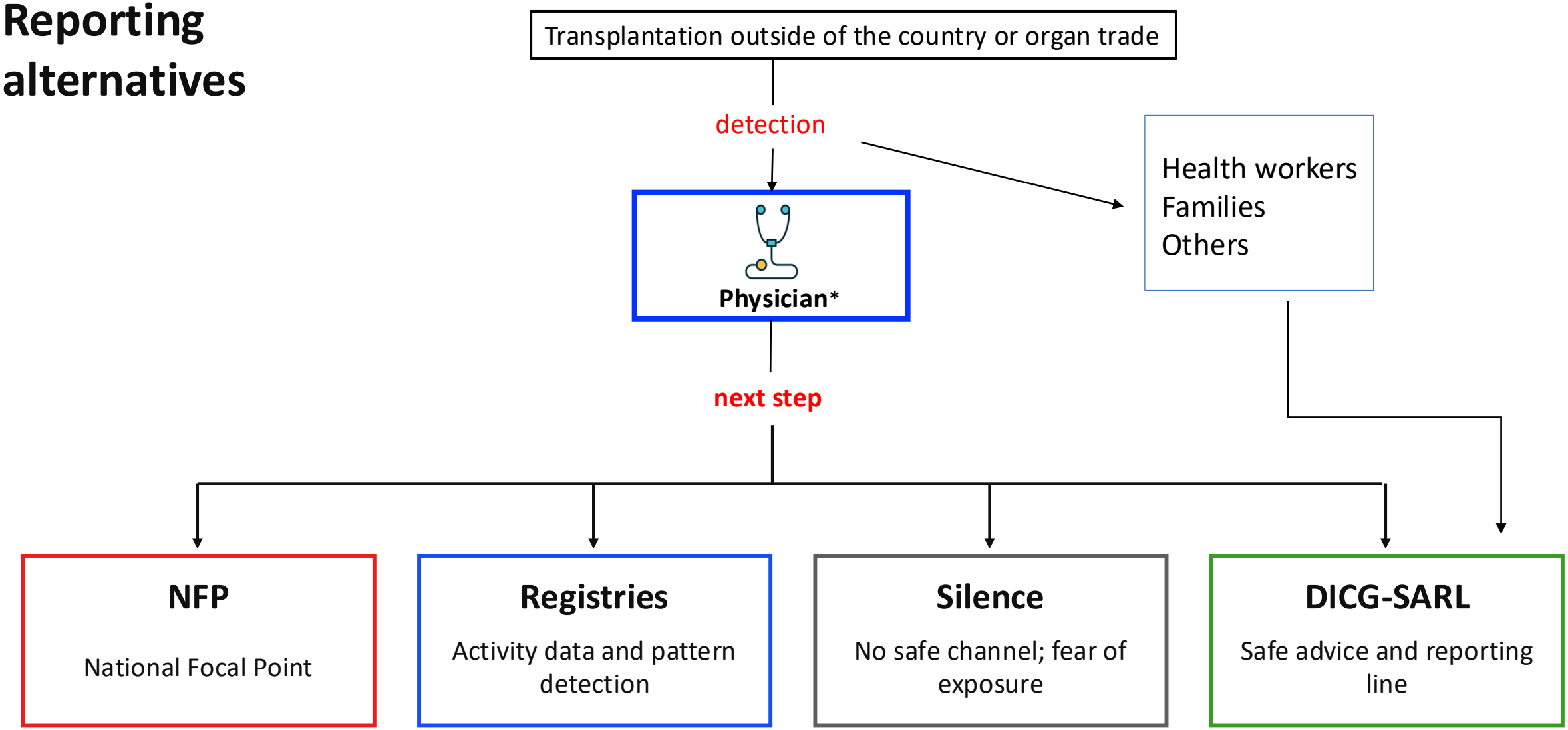
M



The ABC of events … now we are at N



Reporting alternatives



Silence may result when a person has no secure reporting option.

The critical gap

SEEING AN IRREGULARITY ≠ BEING ABLE TO REPORT IT SAFELY



A reporting mechanism that cannot protect the reporter may increase harm.

Reporting in UK

As of 26 August 2026, 103 reports have been submitted (since 1 April 2024). Of these:



The HTA has referred **31** to police for further investigation. In **7** cases the investigation has been completed with no further action to be taken.



For **28** cases, the HTA has made the decision not to refer to the police. This follows review of information / documentation which has helped to provide assurance the transplant was accessed legitimately.



44 cases remain under active review before a decision can be made..

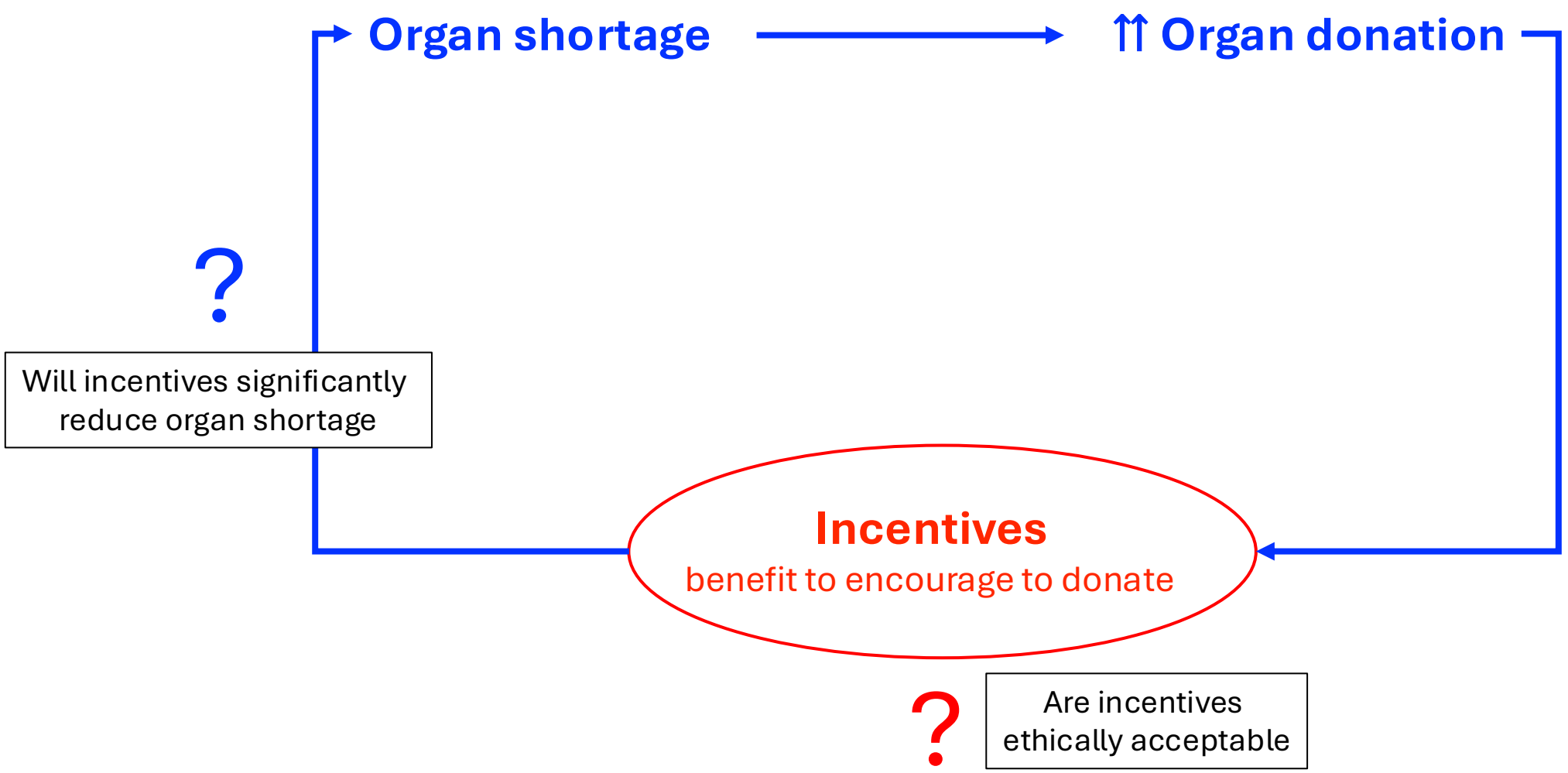
Courtesy Jessica Porter, HTA, UK
21 Sep 2026 – TTS presentation

Countries patients returned from

- Afghanistan: 3
- China: 1
- Egypt: 3
- France: 1
- India: 14
- Iran: 8
- Iraq: 4
- Italy: 1
- Lithuania: 1
- Nigeria: 5
- Pakistan:14
- Philippines: 2
- Poland: 1
- Romania: 2
- Singapore: 1
- Spain: 2
- Sri Lanka: 11
- Syria: 1
- Thailand: 1
- Turkey: 12
- United Arab Emirates: 2
- United States of America: 2
- Vietnam: 1

Courtesy Jessica Porter, HTA, UK
21 Sep 2026 – TTS presentation

Big questions



Ethics

Brocher Workshop, Geneva Oct 27-29 on **'Ethics of Incentives'**

Background (for the DICG) to do this workshop

- stand-still in a **polarized** discussion
- on-going **organ shortage**
- seemingly **diametric goals**: protection of donors vs. increase of donation
- differences and evolving **trends** in (hidden) practices
- *„Wer zu spät kommt, den bestraft das Leben"*
  (Those who are late will be punished by life itself)
  (M. Gorbatschow / G. I. Gerassimow)

Setting the stage on realities of incentives

1. regional practices
2. surveys of the public and other groups
3. factors impacting donation rates
4. patient voices

Focus themes

1. **universalism** of ethics and morals
2. cultural and **religious** specifics
3. sociology of altruism and **solidarity**
4. incentives for **human parts** and services
5. moral **economics** and market design
6. challenges of **implementation research**

Goals

1. have time and a place for a broad, open and in-depth dialogue on a very emotional but relevant topic
2. analyze ethical principles in the global context and in relation to the spectrum of incentives from financial to non-financial rewards
3. develop a consensus/dissensus paper and recommendations

