

TRANSPLANTATION WITHOUT BORDERS: BALKAN INITIATIVE

Start date: Saturday, 24 May 2025 at 09:00

End date: Sunday, 25 May 2025 at 16:00

Country: Tirana, Albania

Venue: TBC

Organised by EKITA, a section of ESOT

Lead: Elvana Rista, Tirana, Albania

Project coordinated with the support of the Albanian Society of Nephrology and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Albania.

Scientific Programme Committee

Elvana Rista, Tirana, Albania

Emin Bariş Akin, Istanbul, Turkey

Carmen Lefaucheur, Paris, France

Fernanda Ortiz, Helsinki, Finland

Jelena Stojanovic, London, United Kingdom

Frank Dor, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Ariana Strakosha, Tirana, Albania

Goce Spasovski, Skopje, North Macedonia

Jamil Azzi, Boston, United States

Organising Committee

Devi Mey, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Alma Idrizi, Tirana, Albania

Margarita Gjata, Tirana, Albania

Entela Kolovani, Tirana, Albania

Ergys Ramosacaj, Tirana, Albania

FINAL AGENDA

Morning Session

09:00–09:30 – Registration & Warm-up

09:30–09:40 – Welcome Remarks – **Devi Mey**, Chief Executive Officer, European Society for Organ Transplantation (ESOT)

09:40–09:50 – Opening Remarks – **Albana Kociu**, Minister of Health, Albania

09:50–09:55 – Opening Remarks from the University of Medicine, Tirana – **Professor Dr. Xheladin Dracini**, Rector

09:55–10:00 - Opening Note from the Scientific Committee – **Jamil R. Azzi**, Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Director, Kidney and Pancreas Transplantation, Brigham and Women's Hospital, United States

10:00–10:20 – The Transplantation Landscape in Europe – **Luciano Potena**, Director of the Heart Failure and Thoracic Transplant Unit of the IRCCS Bologna Academic Hospital. Past President of ESOT

10:20–10:40 – Transplantation in the Balkans: Overview by Country – **Goce Spasovski**, Professor of Nephrology, University of Skopje, Head of the Transplant Unit, North Macedonia

10:40–10:50 – Survey Findings on Kidney Transplantation Challenges in the Balkans – **Elvana Rista**, MD, PhD, Head of the Department of Nephrology and Kidney Transplantation in Hygeia Hospital Tirana, Board Member of EKITA, ESOT, Albania

10:50–11:00 – Coffee Break

Focused Discussions: Common Barriers & Solutions (Current Situation in the Balkans)

11:00–11:10 – Optimizing Living Donation – Current Challenges and Practice in the Balkan Countries – **Alma Idrizi**, Professor of Nephrology, University Hospital Center Mother Teresa Tirana, Albania

11:10–11:30 – Moderated Discussion: **Jelena Stojanovic**, **Goce Spasovski**, **Jamil R. Azzi**, **Frank Dor** (online)

11:30–11:40 – Q&A

11:40–11:50 – *Initiating and Improving Deceased Donation – Current Situation in the Balkans* –

Galina Severova, Associate Professor, University Clinic of Nephrology, Faculty of Medicine, Skopje, North Macedonia

11:50–12:10 – Moderated Discussion: **Ariana Strakosha, Nikolina Jukic, Baris Akin, Jelena Stojanovic, Siada Selmani, Gabriel Oniscu** (online),

12:10–12:20 – Q&A

12:20–13:30 – Lunch Break

Afternoon Session

13:30–13:40 – *Training Transplant Teams – What Kind of Training Exists in the Region?* –

Professor Damir Rebic (Bosnia), Associate Professor, Clinical Center University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
13:40–14:00 – Moderated Discussion: **Jelena Stojanovic, Klodian Allajbeu, Nevi Pasko, Carmen Lefaucheur, Baris Akin**

14:00–14:10 – Q&A

14:10–14:20 – *Legislation in Balkan Countries – Where Do We Stand?* – **Vjollca Godanci Kelmendi, MD**, President of the Nephrology Association of Kosovo, University Clinical Center of Pristina, Kosovo

14:20–14:40 – Moderated Discussion: **Arben Gjata, Baris Akin, Galina Severova, Efstratios Chatzixiros, Artan Hajdari, Ibrahim Rudhami**

14:40–14:50 – Q&A

14:50–15:10 – Coffee Break

Case Studies: Successful Models

Moderators: **Fernanda Ortiz, Carmen Lefaucheur**

15:10–15:25 – Case Study: *Croatia – A Model of Regional Excellence* – **Nikolina Jukic**, President of Croatian Renal Association, University of Zagreb, Croatia

15:25–15:40 – Case Study: *United States – Innovation and Research in Transplantation* – **Jamil R. Azzi**, Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Director of Kidney and Pancreas Transplantation, Brigham and Women's Hospital, United States

15:40-15:50 - Case Study: *Albania – A Country on the Rise in Kidney Transplantation* – **Ariana Strakosha**, Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Nephrology and Kidney Transplantation, University Hospital Center Mother Teresa Tirana, Albania

15:50-16:00 – Q&A

Challenges in Transplantation

16:00-16:20 – *Allograft Rejection: Diagnosis and Treatment* – **Carmen Lefaucheur**, Professor of Nephrology, Head of the Department of Nephrology and Kidney Transplantation, Saint-Louis Hospital-APHP, Paris, Board Member of EKITA, ESOT, France

16:20-16:30 – Q&A

16:30 – Closing Remarks

Day 2 – Addressing Challenges & Future Directions

Morning Session: Addressing Challenges

Moderators: Baris Akin, Elvana Rista, Jelena Stojanovic

09:00–09:10 – Recap of Day 1 & Opening Remarks

09:10–09:30 – Current Diagnostic Tests and Urinary Biomarkers: What Has Been Done and What We Expect – **Jamil R. Azzi**, Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School
Director, Kidney and Pancreas Transplantation, Brigham and Women's Hospital, United States

09:30–09:50 – Early Post-Transplant Management – **Soykan Barlas**, Associate Professor of Surgery, Director of Kidney Transplantation, Bahçeşehir University Medical Park Goztepe Hospital, Istanbul, Turkey

09:50–10:10 – Late Post-Transplant Management – **Fernanda Ortiz, MD, PhD**, Professor University of Helsinki, Head of the Outpatient Clinic in Helsinki University Hospital, Department of Nephrology, Board Member of EKITA, ESOT, Finland

10:10–10:15 – Q&A

10:15–10:30 – Coffee Break

10:30–10:45 – Surgical Techniques & Management of Complications – **Luca Toti, MD, PhD**, Surgeon at the U.O.C. of “Hepatobiliary Surgery and Transplantation” at the Policlinico Tor Vergata Rome, Italy

10:45–11:00 – Landscape of Machine Perfusion and Organ Preservation: Fundamentals for a regional deceased-donor program – **Umberto Cillo**, Professor of General Surgery, Director, Hepatobiliary and Liver Transplant Unit, University Hospital of Padua, Italy – online

Focused Discussions: Paired Donation Program

11:00–11:15 – Why Paired Donation Matters – **Barış Akin**, Chair of the European Society of Transplantation (EKITA), Istanbul, Turkey

11:15–11:45 – Moderated Discussion: Jelena Stojanovic, Aleksandra Gavrilovska Brzanov, Ariana Strakosha, Bahadır Celep, Damir Rabic/Aida Ahmed, Artan Hajdari, Frank Dor (online), Gabriel Onisco (online)

11:45–12:00 Developing National and Regional Paired Donation Programs – ESOT & Regional Experts (All Countries)

This session will focus on initiating paired donation programs at the national level as a first step, with the long-term goal of building a regional framework.

12:00–13:30 – Lunch Break

Afternoon Session: Future Directions

Moderators: Devi Mey, Jamil Azzi, Vincent Karam

13:30–13:45 – *Developing a Transplant Program in the Balkans* – **Devi Mey**, Chief Executive Officer, European Society for Organ Transplantation (ESOT)

This workshop marks the first step toward building a structured, long-term program across the region.

13:45–14:00 – *Integrating Transplantation in the National Health* – **Efstratios Chatzixiros**, Adviser on Transplantation, World Health Organization – online

14:00–14:15 – *Education Modules for Balkan Countries* – **Jelena Stojanovic, MD, FRCPCH**, Consultant Paediatric Nephrologist, Great Ormond Street Hospital, ESOT Ambassador, London, United Kingdom

14:00–14:15 – *Global Overview of the ESOT Scientific Registries* – **Vincent Karam, Ph.D.** Registries General Manager, ESOT

14:15–14:45 – Final Panel: *Building a Regional Collaboration Network* – Moderated Discussion: **Jelena Stojanovic, Goce Spasovski, Arjana Strakosha, Alma Idrizi, Vjollca Godanci, Damir Rebic, Zaklina Shterjova Markovska** (All countries)

14:45–15:00 – Workshop Closing & Next Steps
