
Lithuania: Bishops' Conference, organ donation should be possible only by "conscious decision". No to presumed consent

Organ donation "is a noble act that gives life to another person, but it is obvious that a person's conscious decision to donate an organ must be expressed in his or her active personal actions, and consent to donation cannot be inferred from personal inaction". The Lithuanian Bishops' Conference said this in a statement on its website, taking a stance in the ongoing debate on the proposed amendments to the organ donation legislation, which would allow for the "introduction of presumed consent" to donation. Under this approach, the removal of an organ from a deceased person would be performed assuming the donor's willingness to donate unless a specific request is made before death for organs not to be taken. "The State should encourage the conscious decision of a person to donate their organs after death", the statement reads. The Church, for her part, has always supported the idea of a document "certifying the informed consent of a person", but is opposed to the legitimation of a model where silence is treated as consent to donation. "This would discredit the donation process and undermine confidence while also creating an environment conducive to the spread of myths about donation". While "supporting the aspiration to help patients whose survival depends on donated organs", the Church also demands that donation does not violate "the fundamental right to self-determination".

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