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WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

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PARLIAMENT APPROVES TEXT ON THE DONATION OF SUBSTANCES OF HUMAN ORIGIN

The European Parliament has approved revisions to safe and quality standards for substances of human origin (SoHO). This decision aims to address controversies regarding donor compensation and ensure the EU's autonomy in supply. The new SoHo rules were approved after acceptance by the Parliament's health committee (ENVI) with 483 votes in favor, 52 against, and 89 abstentions.

This initiative was launched by the European Commission last July, aiming to harmonize transplant and donation systems while ensuring the EU's independence in the supply of these substances. The Parliament plans to create a list of critical SoHOs and establish national emergency and supply continuity plans to achieve this goal.

The proposed rules cover various substances, including those not previously considered, such as breast milk and microbiota, in addition to blood, plasma, skin, embryos, sperm, and corneas. These substances play critical roles in transfusions, therapies, transplantations, and medically assisted reproduction throughout the EU. The revision updates a framework established over 20 years ago for tissues, blood, and cells. The EC estimates that 25 million units of blood are transfused annually, 165,000 babies are born through medically assisted reproduction, 4,500 cornea transplants restore sight, and 2,000 skin transplants treat burn injuries.

Source: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/health-consumers/news/eu-parliament-approves-text-on-donation-of-substances-of-human-origin/>

HERA'S STEPS TO MAKE PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS MORE TRANSPARENT

As the European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) approaches its second anniversary, Director-General Pierre Delsaux assured that they are committed to transparency in their work.

Established in September 2021 as part of the European Health Union to address future disease outbreaks, HERA currently consists of 90 personnel and is set to expand to 105 or more by early 2024. It operates with a budget of €6 billion from 2022 to 2027, with additional support from various EU programs, totaling €30 billion.

HERA is currently in a preparedness phase, focused on gathering intelligence, assessing health threats, and securing vaccine manufacturing capacity, but concerns about transparency arose when it was integrated into the European Commission instead of being established as a separate EU agency. In June, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) voted in favor of HERA becoming an independent EU agency with adequate funding, emphasizing that this move would enhance transparency and democratic oversight.

Source: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/health-consumers/news/delsaux-hera-has-taken-steps-to-make-pandemic-preparedness-transparent/>

THE GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH IN FOCUS DURING THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The World Health Organization (WHO) is urging leaders at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 78) to prioritize global health and apply lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. This call comes amidst humanitarian and climate-related crises threatening lives worldwide.

Dedicated efforts are required towards advancing measures for preventing, preparing for, and responding to pandemics, while also ensuring universal access to healthcare, eliminating tuberculosis, and revitalizing the Sustainable Development Goals. Leaders have an opportunity to show that investing in health is essential for resilient societies and economies.

Progress in reducing infant and maternal mortality has stalled, infectious diseases persist, and access to essential health services is unequal. Noncommunicable diseases and mental health issues threaten global development, but there are positive developments following the pandemic. Dr. Tedros, WHO Director-General, underscores that health is not only a human right but also vital for prosperous societies. He will lead the WHO's delegation at UNGA, participating in high-level meetings and launching an updated UHC Global Monitoring Report.

Source: <https://www.who.int/news/item/12-09-2023-WHO-urges-focus-on-health-goals-at-UN-General-Assembly>

Thank you for your attention!

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