European Blood Alliance Founded

There are already nationally organized blood services in Belgium, England, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Scotland. These organizations share the common goals to promote quality and safety of blood as well as self-sufficiency based on voluntary and non-remunerated blood donations. The representatives of these organizations decided on 21st September 1998 in Helsinki, Finland, to establish a new organization, the European Blood Alliance (EBA). The aim of EBA is to develop and to maintain an organizational framework of European national blood services within the European Union.

Blood has become an important issue in the European health development. In 1996, the European Council approved a new agenda for the European Union on blood safety and self-sufficiency. The agenda included seven different recommendations for the Union. The Commission has started working in these areas, and as a result a recommendation on blood donor selection and testing was approved by the European Council in June 1998. Other recommendations are now in preparation.

An expert input is important in this task. The national blood services of the above nine countries concluded that a professional European organization was needed to facilitate the work of the European Union. EBA can voice the common expert opinion of the national blood services and it can provide technical and professional assistance to the European authorities in the filed of blood transfusion. EBA will also promote the voluntary and non-remunerated donation of blood and foster European cooperation between the Member Blood Services.

It was also decided that the Secretariat of the Alliance will be situated in Helsinki at the premises of the Finnish Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service. The Board of the Alliance elected Prof. Juhani Leikola of Finland and Prof. W. G. van Aken of the Netherlands as its first President and Vice-President, respectively.

For further information contact:
Prof. Juhani Leikola, Finnish Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service,
Kivihaantie 7, FIN--00310 Helsinki, Finland,
Tel. +358 9 58 01 250, Fax +358 9 58 01 233,
E-Mail juhani.leikola@bts.redcross.fi

Prof. W. G. van Aken, Central Laboratory CLB, Foundation Sanguin,
PO Box 9190, NL--1006 AD Amsterdam, The Netherlands,
Tel. +31 20 512 3265, Fax +31 20 512 3252,
E-Mail wvanaken@worldonline.nl