



## STATEMENT

# The ONT reiterates its position of zero tolerance to organ trafficking

**4 July 2018.-** The National Transplant Organisation (ONT) reiterates its position of zero tolerance to organ trafficking. Following the information published in *El Confidencial* regarding the liver transplant of Eric Abidal, it states the following:

- The ONT learned of this matter through the press. In light of the serious allegations reported, it has launched an internal investigation in collaboration with the Catalan Transplant Organisation (OCATT) and the Hospital Clínic de Barcelona.
- According to the information the ONT has access to, the donation and transplant procedure of Eric Abidal **was undertaken in line with current legislation and the normal clinical protocols** on transplants from living donors.
- The ONT stresses the fact that Spain was a pioneer in incorporating organ trafficking into the Criminal Code as an offence punishable by up to 12 years in prison.
- In live donor cases, the Spanish transplant system has controls at three different levels for the precise purpose of ensuring that live kidney or liver donations are carried out under the ethical principles of altruism and total free will. The three controls are as follows: 1) the first control is undertaken by a medical team that is independent from the one that is to remove the organ and subsequently perform the transplant; 2) the second is undertaken by the hospital's Ethics Committee, which has to issue a positive or negative decision on the live donation on a case-by-case basis; 3) in the third, the donor, who is accompanied by a doctor from the team that is to remove the organ and by the doctor that assessed him or her, has an interview with a judge, who has to authorise

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the donation and verify that the donor is undertaking the procedure without receiving any financial benefit or being subject to psychological pressure.

- If, in any of the controls, there is a doubt as to whether the donation offer has been made in an explicit, free and altruistic manner or that some type of financial benefit is involved, the organ is not removed and the donation is halted.

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