

EEBA STATEMENT ON PROCESSING OF TISSUES AND CELLS

Venice, 28th March 2013

It is our firm belief that human donor tissues and cells to be used for the treatment of ocular diseases should be processed and distributed on a non-profit basis, and that parts of the human body should not be subject to commercialization, in line with the World Health Organization's Guiding Principles on Human Cell, Tissue and Organ Transplantation. Authorized eye banks and tissue banks provide a crucial service to tens of thousands of patients in Europe each year, making tissues available for the treatment of a wide range of pathologies, and operate on a non-profit basis in accordance with strict ethical principles in order to guarantee access to treatment for the whole population according to criteria of transparency and equity, regardless of gender, religion, national affiliation or colour.

This activity is run by professionals in compliance with exacting international standards and, in the case of EU Member States, in compliance with the three European Directives that regulate the field. In Europe this activity is managed almost entirely within the public sector or non-profit organisations, by doctors, nurses and biologists. The traditional development of the service has been within the public sector and services have been planned to meet clinical need without any profit-making motive. The European Eye Bank Association (EEBA) and European tissue banking activities are based on voluntary donations from deceased European citizens and EEBA considers that the continuation of this non-profit principle as being essential for corneal banking as well as *ex vivo* cell expansion.

The surgical activity linked to the utilization of these tissues and cells is very low (less than 1 per 10 000 inhabitants per year) showing it cannot be considered as a routine activity.

Human donor tissues and cells are intended to be used for the same essential functions in the recipient as in the donor. The objective is to restore the normal anatomy in diseased recipient eyes without looking for particular pharmacological, immunological or metabolic actions. With respects to that issue *ex vivo* cell expansion corresponds to non-substantial manipulation because it does not induce pharmacological, immunological or metabolic modifications of donor cells.

Authorized European eye banks and tissue banks prepare tissues and cells for transplantation according to good practice rules and EU regulations including specific facilities, trained staff, standard operating procedures, and quality management systems.

EEBA is dedicated to promoting the best possible ethical and quality standards for tissue donation, banking and transplantation in Europe and hopes that European regulators will continue to recognise the important and leading-edge work done by the well managed and professional tissue banking services, and continue to grant the right for eye and tissue banks to provide autologous and allogeneic tissues and cells for the benefit of all European citizens.



Professor Jesper Hjortdal MD, PhD
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Professor Vincent Borderie MD, PhD
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The European Eye Bank Association (EEBA) is a technical-scientific organization comprising individual members from 83 eye-banks from 25 European countries. Founded with the simple objective of sharing information regarding eye-banking, the Association is today the leading pan-national association in Europe dedicated to the advancement of eye-banking and an authoritative reference point for eye banks wishing to work according to quality standards.



EUROPEAN
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ASSOCIATION



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