



## World Blood Donor Day: Statement by Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis

Brussels, 14 June 2019

Do you remember that David Bowie song: '[We can be heroes, just for one day](#)'? Can we? I think we can. There is that one thing that definitely makes us heroes: giving blood. It is a live-saving gesture that any of us in good health should consider making.

Every couple of seconds someone around the world needs blood. Blood transfusions save millions of lives each year, both in emergency and non-emergency situations.

As a former cardio surgeon, I can only repeat that donations of blood and its components are needed for a wide range of essential often life-saving treatments, such as trauma, major surgery, cancer or inherited blood diseases. While it might seem that the 20 million blood donations every year, resulting in 25 million blood transfusions to patients, represent a considerable number, the donors are always very much needed given that the actual availability of blood depends on everyone's willingness to donate.

Therefore today, on the World Blood Donor Day, I would like to thank one and all voluntary unpaid blood donors. Your gifts are essential and priceless.

On the European Commission side, we support the EU countries through funding of projects and joint actions that aim to ensure the safety and quality of blood, to improve the availability of blood and the efficiency of the healthcare systems that support donation and supply. The Commission works hand in hand with a network of national competent authorities, professional associations and expert bodies at the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control ([ECDC](#)) and the [Council of Europe](#).

Several [EU rules](#) set out the safety standards for blood collection to ensure that patients are well protected. We are currently evaluating these rules with a view to improve if necessary.

Giving blood is a life-saving gesture that every one of us can 'perform' equally well, (unlike the mentioned song as I find it hard to imagine that anyone could do better than David Bowie himself.) So please consider to become a hero for one day. Or more.

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Press contacts:

[Anca PADURARU](#) (+ 32 2 299 12 69)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)