Turkish Transplant Foundation President Eyüp Kahveci announced on Sunday that 7,767 organ and tissue transplants were carried out in Turkey in the first 10 months of 2019.

On the occasion of the Organ Donation Week, Kahveci stated that in total 71 hearts, 26 lungs, 3,151 kidneys and various other organs and tissues were successfully transplanted. But he warned that the waiting list remains high with almost 23,000 patients waiting for a kidney, 2,298 others for a liver and et cetera.

He said that spreading awareness for organ donations was very important to give another person a chance to live.

Stating that Turkey's organ donation rate is very low compared to European countries, Kahveci explained, "The rate of transplants made from a living donor is high, but our rate of transplants especially from the dead is very low compared to Europe."

Healthy individuals can legally donate their kidneys and liver with their own consent. But once deceased, consent must be given by the spouse or first degree relatives. Upon consent, patients listed on the organ transplant list of the Ministry of Health can receive a kidney, liver, pancreas, lung, heart, heart valves, corneas, face, hands, arms and legs.

Stressing that both the public and the hospital staff alike, especially those working in the Intensive Care Unit, should be made aware of the need to receive more organ donations, Kahveci said that donations from the dead could only be taken from people who are declared brain dead in the ICU.

"According to the latest data of the Ministry of Health, between the months of January and the end of October, a total of 1,921 brain deaths were detected. Of these only 521 relatives gave consent for organ donation."

According to the data of the Turkish Transplant Coordinators Association, Turkey ranks among the first three countries in live transplants because it is a technologically advanced country in terms of field experience.
Some 589 foreign nationals benefited from liver and kidney transplants from live donors last year, a small number compared to the total 4,171 transplants. However, this figure indicates that Turkey is gradually becoming a favorite destination for those seeking transplants thanks to its improved health infrastructure and skilled surgeons.

Around 2 million people in the world, including over 25,000 people in Turkey, are on waiting lists for organ transplants. Unfortunately, about 10% of these patients pass away each year before getting access to a matching organ.

Considering that every year up to 5,000 new people are added to the organ transplant list, Turkey needs at least 25 organ donors per million a year. Although the country is far from this goal, every year, more and more people are becoming aware of the importance of becoming organ donors.