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Editorial Comment

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To paediatricians and especially paediatric cardiologists working in the fortunate part of Europe, the paper by Begic et al. is a confronting one. The paper is indeed a painful illustration of the inequality in health care within Europe. Whereas in the wealthy regions of Europe, the loss of a child with congenital heart disease is rare, in other regions like Bosnia-Herzegovina, basic care for these patients is not available and this leads to unacceptably high mortality rates for children with congenital heart disease.

This paper, therefore, has been accepted for publication not so much for its scientific value but as a document that emphasises the dramatic situation in this part of Europe. The paper could be considered a political document directed at health care officials within Bosnia and the European Union. It should be our concern and

that of the European community to take some action in order to help children with congenital heart disease who happen to be born in Tuzla canton. Moreover, the editorial decision to publish this paper has been inspired by sympathy for the authors who are facing an extremely difficult task. They try to determine the incidence of congenital heart disease as a first tool to define the magnitude of what probably is just one of a series of major health problems in Tuzla. They surely feel powerless and frustrated because they know that a few hundred miles away their colleagues are discussing optimal intensive care management of babies who have undergone the Norwood procedure for hypoplastic left heart syndrome.