

# Europe tightens curbs on organ trafficking

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The Council of Europe adopted on Wednesday a new international convention to make organ trafficking a criminal offence, giving the police greater scope to hunt mafia groups involved in the trade across borders.

The new convention calls on governments to make it illegal for donors to be paid for their organs, or for organs to be removed without the person giving "free and [informed consent](#)". The new laws will also apply to dead donors and their families.

It also provides protection measures and compensation for victims as well as safeguards to encourage equitable access to transplants.

Despite a rise in the number and quality of transplants, more than 60,000 people in Europe were waiting on a [kidney transplant](#) in 2012, the council said in a statement on Wednesday. Every day 12 people on waiting lists die because of the lack of available organs, creating a ready market for unscrupulous surgeons and smugglers, and even for "transplant tourism".

Trafficking often involves mafia groups who profit from the shortage of organs and huge disparities of wealth between rich and developing nations to persuade poor people to sell their organs, it added. The council—which promotes human rights, rule of law and democratic development in 47 states—said the convention could also apply to non-member states willing to sign up to the rules.

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