

Dutch agree law to list all citizens as organ donors

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The Netherlands approved ground-breaking legislation Tuesday that will in future register all citizens over the age of 18 as potential organ donors—unless they explicitly opt out.

Senators in a narrow 38 to 36 vote, decided to implement the draft bill by a member of the progressive D66 party, aiming to broaden the pool of [organ donors](#) in the country of 17 million people.

"The bill has been accepted," Senate chairwoman Ankie Broekers-Knol told the 75-seat upper house, to the applause from the new law's supporters.

Dutch citizens will in future receive two letters by mail to indicate whether or not they want to become donors—if they have not reacted after the second mail, they will automatically be placed on the donor list.

The [new legislation](#) was first narrowly approved by parliament's lower house in 2016, with opponents saying it placed too much power in the hands of government to decide what happened to citizens after their deaths.

But Pia Dijkstra, the D66 MP behind the [bill](#), made some changes to the original [legislation](#) which will now include that the deceased's relatives always have the last say, unless the dead person specifically stated they did not want to be a donor.

Furthermore before any donation, authorities must consult with relatives, otherwise the donation cannot go ahead, Dijkstra said.

Currently, more than 40 percent of citizens are registered on the country's [donor](#) list—including those who explicitly said they did not want their organs donated after their deaths, the NOS public newscaster said.

With the new legislation "there will therefore be more organ donors. During the first half of 2016, some 57 people died waiting for a new organ," the NOS reported.

"Hopefully that number will decline under the new system," it said.

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