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First international treaty to combat trafficking in human organs opened for signature

Santiago de Compostela (Spain), 25.03.2015 – Fourteen European states today signed the [Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs](#), the first international treaty aimed at preventing and combating trafficking in human organs.

The Convention was opened for signature on the first day of an international conference, organised by the Council of Europe and the Spanish government in Santiago de Compostela, to discuss how to better fight trafficking in human organs, and how to implement the new treaty.

The convention was signed by Albania, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom. It is open for signature by any state in the world and will enter into force when five states have ratified it.

"The illicit removal and trafficking of human organs is a serious human rights violation. Donors are often extremely vulnerable individuals exploited by organised crime, which takes advantage of the shortage of organs available for transplantation. International co-operation is essential to fight this crime. I call on states in Europe and beyond to swiftly sign and ratify the convention", said Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland.

The convention provides a comprehensive framework to make trafficking in human organs a criminal offence, to protect the victims, and to facilitate cooperation at national and international level to prosecute those responsible for trafficking. It criminalises the illicit removal of human organs from living or deceased donors and their use for transplantation or other purposes, and other related acts.

Protection measures for victims include physical, psychological and social assistance, legal aid and providing the right to compensation from the perpetrators.

The convention aims to prevent trafficking in human organs by, for example, requiring states to ensure the transparency of their national system for transplantation of organs, and equitable access to transplant services.

[More information](#)

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