

Swiss opts for 'presumed consent' on organ donations

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To combat the shortfall of organs for transplant, Switzerland has shifted to "opt-out" system of organ donation in May 2022. Everyone is now potentially a donor unless an individual has actively chosen to opt out and the new rule was supported by 60 percent of voters in a referendum. The government will have to develop regulations implementing the new legislation. The Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) has indicated that the new legislation will come into effect in 2024 at the earliest. "The public have shown that they are ready to give a chance to the people who are on the waiting list," said Franz Immer, the director at the Swisstransplant. Interior Minister Alain Berset said that the transition to the new law would be done "very carefully", and that the priority will continue to be on securing the most important piece of information: the true will of the deceased person regarding their organ donation.

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In 2021, Switzerland, a nation of over 8.6 million people, had 1,400 transplant candidates on the waiting list. There were 166 deceased donors who donated their organs, and 484 organs were retrieved and transplanted. However, 72 patients died waiting on an organ transplant waiting list, according to the Swiss transplant.

The majority of the European Union nations have adopted the soft opt-out consent model with Switzerland joining the list recently.

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