

## **The Independent Online**

### **All French citizens are now organ donors unless they opt out**

People must sign up to a refusal register if they do not want to be donors

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Every citizen in France has automatically become an organ donor unless they decide to opt out, due to a significant change in the law.

The new rules, which came into effect on 1 January, sees France's policy align with a number of European countries such as Spain and Austria, where "presumed consent" means anyone can become a donor of organs and tissues when they die unless they specifically choose not to.

In France, people will now need to sign up to a new National Rejection Register to ensure they do not become organ donors, which medical teams will check at the time of death before considering organ or tissue removal. A total of 150,000 people have already signed up to the register, according to the *Guardian*.

If it is not possible to sign up to the register, people can also sign and date a written refusal and leave it with a relative, or make an oral testimony to a relative who will then need to attest this wish to a medical team.

The UK rejected a system of presumed consent in 2008, instead opting for increasing public awareness about organ donation.

This system was overturned in Wales, and in 2015 it became the first UK nation to implement presumed consent.

Outside of Wales, people in the UK must register as a donor, and it is common practice to let a relative know if someone would like to be a donor or not for doctors to take into consideration.

According to NHS Blood and Transplant, 6,416 people are currently waiting for a transplant in the UK. The number of people who have received a transplant since April 2016 is 2,726.