



THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION AGAINST THE TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN ORGANS: AN IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENT TO SAFEGUARD PEOPLE'S HEALTH AND SECURITY

Transplantation procedures have become increasingly sophisticated and offer nowadays unforeseen opportunities of survival to hundred of thousands of patients. However, due to the global organ shortage, unethical practices like organ trafficking and transplant tourism have progressively emerged and spread worldwide, rapidly becoming a highly profitable business for transnational organised criminal groups. These practices represent a serious threat to public health and human security, egregious violations of fundamental human rights and a bold infringement of universal principles of medical ethics.

The Council of Europe Convention against the Trafficking in Human Organs represents a robust response to this global criminal phenomenon and a milestone in the fight against unlawful and unethical practices in transplantations. This paper highlights the importance of the Convention inasmuch as it fills existing gaps in international law, increases the level of harmonisation of domestic legal systems and fosters better international cooperation in criminal matters. Combined with other relevant international legal tools, the Convention provides a comprehensive framework to curtail distinct types of transplant-related crimes at European level and beyond.