

# The President of Latvia: effective penal policy is impossible without an organisation for the execution of sentences

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On 27 November President Edgars Rinkēvičs got acquainted with the conditions in Riga Central Prison and the activities of the Prison Administration (hereinafter – the Administration).

During the visit, President Rinkēvičs met with the Head of the Administration Dmitrijs Kaljins and the Head of Riga Central Prison Raivis Runcis, who provided an insight into the activities of the Central Prison. During the meeting, they discussed the resocialisation of prisoners, the need for adequate remuneration for the staff of the Administration and the high number of vacancies in the Administration.

'Today, having familiarised ourselves with the working conditions and specifics of work in Riga Central Prison, there are justified concerns about the large number of vacancies in the Prison Administration. At the same time, I appreciate the vision of the Authority - modern prisons for a safer society. The Authority has two missions that are crucial to the security of society as a whole: the execution of sentences and the preparation of individuals for responsible and active participation in society after serving their sentences. Effective penal policy is not possible without a penal enforcement organization. This requires educated and motivated staff, adequate infrastructure, but also the involvement of the public as volunteer supporters or social entrepreneurs. I thank the staff of the Administration, but also the members of the public who get involved. The primary goal of the enforcement of sentences is public safety,' said President Rinkēvičs after the visit.

In order to get acquainted with the daily work of the staff of the Administration, the President of Latvia visited the Central Prison's Duty Department, the Admissions Unit and the supervising department. In order to get an idea of the living conditions of the inmates, President Rinkēvičs visited the Short-Term Imprisonment Unit and Unit 4, where he saw the inmates' cells, the gym, the library, as well as other facilities of the prison, which are an important part of the inmates' daily life. During the visit, the

President of Latvia had the opportunity to assess the working and educational opportunities for prisoners in Riga Central Prison.



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