

## President of Latvia meets with senior justice system officials to discuss topical justice affairs for 2024

 Published more than 1 year ago

Published: 11.01.2024.



On 10 January, President Edgars Rinkēvičs met with the President of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Latvia Aldis Laviņš, President of the Supreme Court Aigars Strupišs, Prosecutor General Juris Stukāns, Chairman of the Saeima Legal Affairs Committee Andrejs Judins, and Minister of Justice Inese Lībiņa-Egnere at the Riga Castle. During the meeting, the President of Latvia and senior officials of the justice system discussed the topical justice affairs for 2024, including penal legislation, as well as cooperation between constitutional bodies to strengthen justice and the rule of law.

The President took the position that the sustainability and efficacy of the legal system requires avoiding overregulation and excessive legal fragmentation, which renders the application of laws more challenging and also increases bureaucracy. At the same time, the legal system must offer the requisite instruments for protecting national security. Therefore, there must be a concerted focus on strengthening penal legislation in domains of societal importance in order to avoid harm to national and public safety.

During the meeting with senior officials of the justice system, E. Rinkēvičs highlighted the importance of readiness in responding to technological advancements, particularly the development of artificial intelligence, as one of the most pressing challenges in the near future.

Regarding the efficiency and independence of the judiciary, the President of Latvia called for continuing efforts to strengthen the quality of judicial performance in order to increase public confidence in procedural fairness and due process of law. However, the independence of the judiciary must not be misconstrued as immunity from constructive criticism.

The parties also discussed efforts to improve penal legislation. Since the summer of 2023, there have been concerted efforts to

ensure that the Criminal Law and its application align with the present threat landscape and prevent harm to national and public interests. Nevertheless, the adequate and appropriate application of penal legislation by the judiciary remains a relevant issue.



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