

President of Latvia: Every individual who interacts with the judiciary must be assured of a fair trial

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On 9 February, President Edgars Rinkēvičs attended a meeting of the Judicial Council to learn about its activities and work priorities for 2024.

During the meeting with the representatives of the Judicial Council, the President of Latvia highlighted that concrete efforts have been undertaken since the summer of 2023 to ensure that the Criminal Law and its application are aligned with present threats and challenges. With Latvia facing a hybrid threat and the deterioration of the security environment posed by Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the legislator has given a clear signal on what should be the penal policy on matters concerning national security.

The Jēkabpils case has eroded public confidence in the Latvian state's ability to provide adequate protection to those in need. This confidence was further damaged by the news of 2 February regarding an attempted abduction of the victim by a violent attacker, after the temporary protection against violence and restraining order had been lifted.

"The lack of confidence in the state's ability to protect its people has a catastrophic impact on public trust in state authority and willingness to support it, even in crisis situations. The rule of law, the effectiveness of the judiciary, and justice are not merely theoretical constructs. However, the effectiveness of the judiciary cannot be attained without public confidence and trust in public authority, including the judiciary. Therefore, it is essential for the judiciary to justify its decisions and explain them to the public clearly and concisely," said President Rinkēvičs.

The President of Latvia believes that the state's ability to provide justice, as well as security, is reflected in the level of public trust in the state. It is important that every person who interacts with public authorities, including the judiciary and independent legal professions, has confidence that their case will be handled fairly. It is crucial to ensure due process in every case. It is therefore

important to remember that professionalism does not imply indifference. Professionalism means treating everyone with respect and care.

"The public's trust in the state is shaped by how the state responds to its own mistakes. The judiciary and the legal community must demonstrate their ability to recognize unjust transgressions and undertake necessary corrective measures," said the President of Latvia.

For information:

The establishment of the Judicial Council is mandated by the Law "On the Judicial Power". The Judicial Council is a collegial institution that contributes to the development of policy and strategy for the judicial system, as well as the improvement the organization of the judiciary. The establishment of the Judicial Council aims to balance the relationship between the executive, judicial, and legislative branches.



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