

Inspection visit to the house of detention of the Rapla Police Station

On 8 February 2018, the advisers of the Chancellor of Justice made an unannounced inspection visit to the house of detention of the Rapla Police Station of the Police and Border Guard. During the inspection, the rooms and documents of the house of detention were examined and detainees were interviewed by the advisers.

It is positive that in several reports of detainment of a person as a suspect, it had been indicated for how long special equipment (e.g. handcuffs and legcuffs) was used on the detainee upon detainment and afterwards in the house of detention. Such recordings are a good practice because the use of special equipment rather intensively affects the fundamental rights of the person and may give rise to subsequent disagreements and legal disputes. Careful recording of the use of special equipment helps to solve these disputes. It is also commendable that on the basis of the recommendations made as a result of the previous visit by the Chancellor of Justice, a partial roof offering protection from the weather conditions and a bench have been installed in the walking yard.

However, it should be pointed out that the windows of the cells of the house of detention do not allow enough natural light to reach the cells. Thus, a solution must be found that would ensure better natural light in the cells. The artificial lighting in the cells should be located in a more suitable position for reading and writing, but not be blindingly intense. The detainees must have a chance to stay outdoors for at least an hour every day (incl. at the weekend). In every single case it must be assessed whether there needs to be 24/7 video surveillance in the cells of the house of detention. Clean water cups must be available to persons placed in a cell for sobering up. The detainees must have access to national daily newspapers. Information on the receipt of packages and visits must not be controversial. Documents regarding a detainee must be drawn up correctly, i.e. among other things, the detainee's injuries, the notification of the next of kin, the duration of the use of the special equipment and the date of the document must be recorded.