

Inspection of Tallinn Prison

On 9 July 2014 advisers to the Chancellor of Justice paid an unannounced visit to Tallinn Prison. The visit focused primarily on guaranteeing the fundamental rights of the persons detained in the solitary confinement block of Tallinn Prison and persons held in residential blocks E1 and E2 in the prison unit on Magasini Street.

According to its statutes, Tallinn Prison is a government agency in the area of government of the Ministry of Justice, which carries out deprivation of freedom and preliminary imprisonment, and organises probation supervision. Tallinn Prison is a maximum-security prison with a provisional custody department and an open prison as a structural unit. Arrested male and female adults and convicted male adults are detained in the prison. There were 975 detained persons, incl. 642 convicted persons and 333 arrested persons, in Tallinn Prison as at 7 July 2014. 39 of the detainees were women.

The Chancellor of Justice inspected Tallinn Prison thoroughly in 2005, 2008 and 2011.

As a result of the inspection the Chancellor of Justice makes the following recommendations:

1. remove all metal coverings from the windows of the solitary confinement block to improve lighting conditions and once again consider discontinuing the use of the solitary confinement block in conditions where the number of detainees is decreasing;
2. analyse the practice of shower room use in residential block E1 and, if necessary, take measures to effect the realisation of the essential right stipulated in Subsection 50 (2) of the Imprisonment Act and required for dignified life in prison and consider repairing the shower rooms and hot water systems in block E1;
3. be attentive regarding the issuing of items of personal hygiene (especially toilet paper, soap, women's sanitary towels etc.) to persons who have just arrived in the prison and guarantee that such detainees can receive or acquire items of personal hygiene within a reasonable time;
4. take measures to ensure that it is not possible to listen in on meetings held in procedure room number 250 in block E1 from the storage room next door;
5. guarantee that detainees can use the computer in the relevant room in block E1 so as to use the databases of legislation and court ruling to the extent permitted by law.

In order to check compliance with the recommendations, the Chancellor of Justice will carry out a follow-up inspection within six months of the time the recommendations were made.