

**Annual report**  
**&**  
**Financial statements**  
**2021**



## Foreword

Hereby I present the third annual report of the PrisonWatch foundation. This report provides information about the activities that have been carried out in 2021 and the financial results.

Unfortunately the covid pandemic did not fade out in 2021. To prevent the spread of covid in prison the penitentiary institutions were not allowed to welcome external visitors or held physical meetings. As a result, PrisonWatch was not able to carry out its planned activities; the creation of a network of volunteers that could visit their countrymen in prison activities, the extension to other penitentiary institutions and creating awareness during lectures to relevant partners.

The foundation expanded its activities however in the penitentiary institution of Alphen aan den Rijn (PI Alphen). Besides activities in unit West (pre-trial prisoners) at the Eikenlaan it expanded to section South of the Maatschapslaan (pre-trial prisoners including a special care unit). Like in 2020 multiple multi-lingual prisoners became PrisonWatch Host and helped other prisoners in their own language to settle in. The voluntary work of these Hosts, easily recognizable by wearing a red safety vest, becomes gradually a common practice in the institution. The PrisonWatch Team, which consists of members of staff in PI Alphen, grew again in number and they carried out different activities and attended the regular meetings. Due to covid-restrictions it was not possible to build a network of external visitors nor to create awareness.

I thank the Hosts and the PrisonWatch Team in PI Alphen for their time and dedication to address the needs of foreign nationals in prison. Furthermore, I am thankful for the support and advice of the members of the Supervisory Board and the Advisory Board. I especially like to thank Astrid de Jong (Engagement partner) and Ana Bibic (PrisonWatch-coordinator in PI Alphen) for their work and Cees Niessen, prison governor of PI Alphen, for allowing Ana Bibic and me a few hours per week to spend on PrisonWatch-activities.



Dr. Femke Hofstee-van der Meulen  
Founder PrisonWatch & deputy prison governor of PI Alphen.

*The foundation has been established to watch over foreign nationals. The mission of PrisonWatch is to make a human connection with those detained abroad and to create awareness about their situation. By visiting them we can contribute to inclusiveness for those who are excluded. By doing so PrisonWatch likes to contribute to a humane, inclusive and fair society.*

*"The fact that you can seek support via PrisonWatch is positive for both prisoners and staff."*

Member of staff at a wing

## 1. Activities

In 2021 PrisonWatch extended its work from unit West (pre-trial prisoners) at the Eikenlaan to unit South (pre-trial prisoners and special care unit) at the Maatschapslaan of the penitentiary institution Alphen. The reason for enlarging the scope of PrisonWatch work is that its involvement has been regarded as having a positive impact on foreign national prisoners and on daily prison life. During the year over 100 foreign national prisoners received direct support from a Host and by members of the PrisonWatch Team.



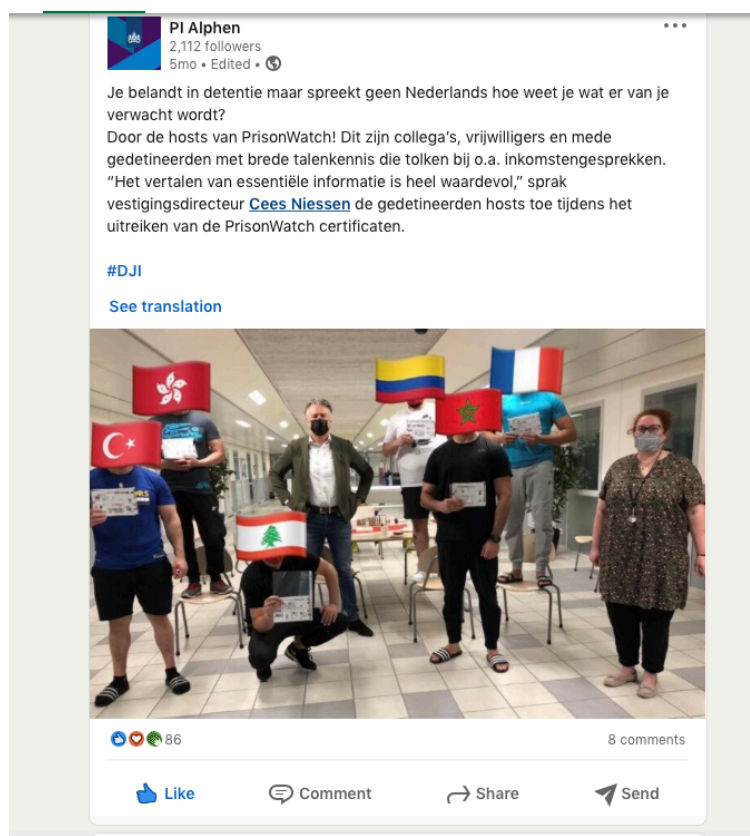
## CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

is awarded to

for serving as a PrisonWatch Host.

Your work as a volunteer for foreign national prisoners is very much appreciated.

Date: Place: Name:



In June a ceremony was organized to thank the Hosts for their important work. During this ceremony the Hosts at the Eikenlaan received a *Certificate of Appreciation* by Cees Niessen, prison governor of PI Alphen, to express his gratitude. A picture of this event was shared by the institution via LinkedIn and it received many positive comments.

### *Celebration of diversity & inclusion*

PI Alphen acknowledges the presence of foreign nationalities in its institution and that their presence not only entails different languages but also different eating cultures.

Normally prisoners receive daily a pre-cooked and deep-frozen meal that is delivered to them in a black box. In their cell they can heat up this meal in a microwave. Although the institution can provide meals that are prepared according to medical and religious (halal, kosher) needs, there is not a lot of variation in the ingredients that are served. To celebrate diversity and to promote inclusion PI Alphen asked the PrisonWatch Hosts to select a menu with foreign ingredients that is being appreciated by all. As a result, the Hosts cooked Surinam roti with chicken and bara for in total 144 prisoners and members of staff.



### *Applications for support*

During the year 2021 PrisonWatch approached the foundations Kansfonds and Haëlla Stichting for support. The application to the Kansfonds for activities in 2021-2022 was kindly approved and the Haëlla Stichting promised to support PrisonWatch once foundation Kansfonds would transfer their donation.

## **2. Working methods**

### *How to find PrisonWatch in PI Alphen?*

On the main page of the internal website of PI Alphen there is a special section on PrisonWatch. This section is weekly updated by the coordinator. The page contains information on the goals of the foundation and translation of the prison rules and procedures in different foreign languages. Furthermore, it contains a list of staff members that belong to the PrisonWatch Team, the languages they speak and their contact details. There is also a list of PrisonWatch Hosts with similar information about the languages they speak and where they can be found (wing and cell number). On several wings there are posters with information about PrisonWatch and there is also a special PrisonWatch internal email address.

### *How to seek support from a Host?*

Based on the information on intranet, prison staff can call their colleagues at the wing where the Host is located and ask them to temporarily send the Host for support. Host



are allowed to go temporarily to another wing and they wear a red safety vest with the name 'PrisonWatch Host' to ensure that they are visible.



### *How to become a Host?*

Each new prisoner receives an intake by a casemanager and a mentor on the wing. One of the questions of the intake is about the ability to speak a foreign language. In case the prisoner speaks a different language and if he is interested to participate in voluntary work, he is informed about the activities of PrisonWatch and receives a folder. If the prisoner is willing to become a Host his request is discussed during a multidisciplinary meeting (MDO) with members of staff from different disciplines. If there are no objections the prisoner is nominated to become a Host. Once he is appointed by the director in the 'Vrijheden Commissie', the Host is visited by the coordinator. During this conversation he receives more information about the content of the work and the do's and don't's.

*"When these men from Albania did see me, it looked as if they saw God!"*

PrisonWatch Host

*"I like to help others because I know how difficult it is.."*

PrisonWatch Host who was previously detained abroad

Every month a meeting is organized by the coordinator for the Hosts to discuss the work. These meetings are often attended by other members of the PrisonWatch-Team. The Hosts and foreign national prisoners receive a birthday card in their own language.

### *How to spot prisoners who do not speak Dutch nor English?*

Upon arrival it is noticeable for prison staff that a newcomer does not speak Dutch or English. As soon as possible this lack of communication is being discussed by prison staff and support is sought via PrisonWatch by sending an email to the PrisonWatch Team. In 2021 case managers have become more and more used to contact PrisonWatch when they encounter communication difficulties.

### *What is the role of the PrisonWatch-coordinator?*

In 2021 PrisonWatch was able to involve Ana Bibic, quality officer and member of the team, as coordinator. She visits the wings on a weekly basis to verify whether there are newcomers that encounter language difficulties and need support and whether the

Hosts are doing well and whether the information on intranet about their location is still up to date. On a regular basis Ana participates in team-meetings of prison officers at a wing and case managers to inform them about the work of PrisonWatch.

#### *PrisonWatch Team PI Alphen*

To address this issue PrisonWatch works with a dedicated group of members of staff that have special attention for foreign nationals and try to address their needs. The team consists of around 20 members, and they speak over twenty different languages. Some of them have a non-Dutch background. In practice they are often contacted by their colleagues to provide language support, for example during the intake in prison. The PrisonWatch Team meets every eight weeks to do discuss the work. In June the covid-restrictions were less strict and therefore we could have an outdoor social event to thank them for their work.



#### **PI Alphen aan den Rijn**

The penitentiary institution of Alphen aan den Rijn consists of two locations next to each other. The location at the Eikenlaan holds 'arrestanten' (short sentences) and pre-trial prisoners. And the Maatschapslaan holds pre-trail prisoners, prisoners who need additional care (EZV). PI Alphen has a capacity of over 1,100 places and it holds around 950 prisoners daily. Annually around 8,000 prisoners enter this prison and around 25% of them have a foreign background. Of these 2,000 prisoners around 500 encounter language difficulties because they do not speak or read Dutch. As a result of the language obstacle, it is hard for them to communicate with others and to understand the prison rules and procedures.

### 3. Covid pandemic and PrisonWatch

As mentioned in the foreword, the Covid pandemic effected, like in 2020, the work of PrisonWatch. The consequence was threefold. First, penitentiary institutions were not allowed to provide access to external visitors. This prevented us to build a network of external volunteers that could visit their countrymen in the penitentiary institution of Alphen aan den Rijn. Secondly, the planned 'expansion' to other institutions was again hampered. There were no follow-up meetings with staff in the penitentiary institution of Nieuwersluis and PI Ter Apel. However, in the fall, two meetings took place with staff of the Judicial Complex (JC) Schiphol. The plan that a staff-member of JC Schiphol would receive a one-day PrisonWatch-introduction-day in PI Alphen was postponed due to further restrictions in December. Thirdly, the activities directed towards creating awareness and visibility, such as advice, training, and lectures to relevant parties, were postponed.

### 4. Financial situation

In 2021, PrisonWatch received financial support and support in kind. The foundation Kansfonds kindly donated in total € 12,600 and € 275 was received from Engagement partner Astrid de Jong. The donation by the Haëlla Stichting, under the condition that the support from Kansfonds was provided, was not received. The materials used by the foundation were donated in kind by PrisonWatch Advice, which amounted to € 500. Like in previous years the time spend on the different activities has been carried out by everyone<sup>1</sup> on a voluntary basis or during working time.

#### Financial statements 2021

<b>Assets</b>		<b>Liabilities</b>	
Bank	€ 12,893	Capital	€ 293
		Reservations	€12,600
<b>Profit &amp; loss</b>			
<i>Income</i>			
Donations	€ 12,875		
Donations in kind	€ 500		
<i>Expenses</i>			
Banking costs	€ 119		
Materials	€ 500		
<b>Balance</b>	€ 12,756		

<sup>1</sup> PrisonWatch Hosts, members of the PrisonWatch Team PI Alphen, members of the Supervisory and Advisory Board, engagement partner and founder.

### **Why PrisonWatch?**

In recent decades prison populations have become less homogeneous. In prisons all around the world a huge range of nationalities and languages can be found alongside cultural and religious diversity. Foreign national prisoners (FNPs) are detained in relatively large numbers. This is particularly true for countries in the European Union (EU), where on average nearly one in every five prisoners is a foreigner.

In daily prison life FNPs encounter many difficulties because of their foreign status, language difficulties and distance from their families. In practice, prison authorities are often not fully aware of the problems FNPs face, and they do not address their special needs. As a result, FNPs often feel socially excluded and are unable to exercise their rights. A PhD-study, conducted by Femke Hofstee, revealed that social visits from volunteers have a very positive effect on their well-being and their reintegration into society after release. More information about this study can be found at [www.prisonwatch.org](http://www.prisonwatch.org).