

Activity plan 2024

Summary

In 2024 PrisonWatch continues to expand its activities in the penitentiary institution (PI) of Alphen aan den Rijn and hopefully in other institutions, such as the Judicial Complex Schiphol, the Detention Centre in Rotterdam, Penitentiary Institution Krimpen, Dordrecht and Ter Apel. During a meeting with religious representatives, they expressed interest in engaging PrisonWatch in their care for foreign nationals. On average one in every five prisoners in The Netherlands has a foreign nationality.

Activities in the penitentiary institution in Alphen aan den Rijn

Around one quarter of all prisoners in The Netherlands are detained for a shorter or longer period in PI Alphen. With an average flow of 8,000 prisoners per year, PI Alphen detains many prisoners who encounter language difficulties because they do not speak or read Dutch. By helping this group PrisonWatch contributes to a humane, inclusive and fair detention.

PrisonWatch Team

To address the language and social issues PrisonWatch works in PI Alphen with a dedicated group of members of staff who have special attention for foreign nationals and try to address their needs. The PrisonWatch Team consists of around twenty members and together they speak over twenty-five different languages. In practice they are often contacted by their colleagues to provide language support, for example during intakes in prison and when trying to avoid that prisoners end up in isolation cells due to communication problems. The PrisonWatch Team meets four times per year to discuss the voluntary work. One member of the teams serves as coordinator and visits the wings on a weekly basis. In 2024 the coordinator might receive support from a Host and or intern in the Reintegration Centre (RIC).

PrisonWatch Hosts

The Hosts are prisoners who help other prisoners in their own language to get adjusted into prison life and who provide social support. PrisonWatch Host can carry out this voluntary job after they have been approved by the Multidisciplinary meeting (MDO). They receive a short training and they meet on a regular basis with the PrisonWatch coordinator. Hosts receive a 'Certificate of Appreciation' from the prison director. Their voluntary work is being described in their 'Detention & Reintegration' plan.

PrisonWatch Visitors

In 2024 PrisonWatch will continue increasing the network of Visitors that visit their countrymen in prison on a voluntary basis. There are currently three visitors and they speak Bulgarian, Finnish, Hungarian and Russian.

Funding

In 2024 PrisonWatch will seek funding from different donors, including foundation Kansfonds, Haëlla and Afas, and donations-in-kind in penitentiary institutions where PrisonWatch is/will be active. Funding is necessary to buy essentials for the different volunteers, such as:

- The PrisonWatch Host receives a package with information about the foundation and the picture dictionary *Picture it in Prison* and a pencil with PrisonWatch logo.
- Prison staff receive a similar picture dictionary.
- Each wing receives a larger version (A4-size) of the picture dictionary.
- PrisonWatch Hosts wear a red 'safety jacket' with the PrisonWatch logo to show that they are on 'duty' and are allowed to be on a different wing.
- The PrisonWatch Team meets four times per year including one social event.
- PrisonWatch Visitors receive a half-day training session, training material, travel costs and an annual social event.