Sad record: 1,426 illegal mobile phones seized in Berlin prisons in 2015
Number of findings increases city-wide over all penal institutions - dark figure is likely to be much higher

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1,426 mobile phones have been seized by the Berlin prison staff during 2015. This is almost 41 percent more than during the same period one year before. The figures published by the Berlin Senate Administration for Justice and Consumer Protection reveal: Illegally smuggled mobile phones are a steadily growing issue in the penitentiary system, especially since the dark figure of devices inside the prison walls is presumably many times higher. The City of Berlin responds to the growing security gap with technological *armament*.

After the first successful pilot where mobile detection and elimination technology has been deployed in a building section of the Berlin juvenile prison, installations in a new complex of JVA Tegel and another one of JVA Moabit for which comprehensive refurbishments will be carried out shortly are to follow. The planned effect of the technological measures: From the time of activation the mobile phones that are smuggled into the prisons at high risks and horrendous prices are entirely useless, as any attempt of a mobile connection will be immediately disrupted. As the test in the Berlin juvenile prison showed, the problem so will rapidly solve by itself. Since the date of the technology's activation to the present, not a single mobile phone has been found.

Increasing figures also in Brandenburg

In Brandenburg too, the number of illegally smuggled mobile phones increased distinctly over the last year. While 109 mobile phones were seized in 2014, their number already rised to almost 150 in 2015 and hence increased by almost 40 percent. Here too one prison facility which must not yet be disclosed to the public is testing technical equipment for the disruption of illegal mobile communication. And not only German prison facilities are setting up: Also in Austrian and Swiss prisons first testings of technology are under way, in order to stop what is likely to be the overriding security issue in the coming times.

> For further information on Gerdes' Mobile Wall technology please see:
> **www.prisec.de/en/products/mobilewall**

Prisons' control measures still insufficient

The sad fact is that the elaborate and time-consuming security and control measures that the facilities are already implementing, prove to be insufficient to suppress smuggling. Mobile phones are still being brought into prison by post, visitors, by corrupt facility suppliers or simply by becoming thrown over the prison walls. And, unfortunately, it's not rare that even prison staff members are among the phone smugglers, as corresponding trials show, and as it is currently the case for staff members of the Bavarian JVA Aschaffenburg and the Rhineland-Palatinate JVA Diez who are standing trial for this charge.

And this despite the fact that there are already strict inspections aiming at preventing the illicit insertion of objects into prisons: inmates are being searched, also undressed, at their initial reception, as well as after any absence of the prison and generally in case of suspicious facts, the same goes for their belongings; also visitors entering prison are being controlled, manually and also with the aid of metal detectors, the visits then visually monitored, letters and parcels are controlled, any vehicle entering as well as inmates, their prison cell rooms and the items of general use made available to them.

But in spite of all the abovementioned measures, more and more mobile phones are located within the prison walls creating a dilemma for the facilities: The illegal phones open up opportunities for uncontrolled communication that pose a great security risk not only to the outside world, but also to the small parallel society within prison. The phones could be used to influence and blackmail witnesses, to organise crimes and prison escapes as well as throws of mobile phones, drugs and weapons over the prison walls at agreed times and places. This frightening security gap can be closed by technical solutions. The illegaly smuggled mobile phones are totally useless once the technology is switched on. And since the system works fully independently in the background, it brings a massive reduce of workload for the prison staff with it.