

St. Eustatius, July 18, 2021.

Dear (deputy) government commissioner on St. Eustatius,

First of all, a word of thanks for the prompt response ¹.

From the press release and your response, I understand that an independent commission is being established under the name Statia Heritage Research Commission [SHRC], consisting of regional experts in the fields of anthropology, archaeology and history.

The development is good, it seems to me. There are three points that I - and with me the group of Statians - would like to dwell on at this time:

- **The way in which this commission will be composed.** For the sake of independence, we think it would be correct if experts were not just chosen by you to sit on this commission, but that an equal number of experts would be appointed by us.
- **The formulation of the assignment.** We do not expect any major differences of opinion about the precise formulation of an assignment and the expectations regarding the products to be delivered and within what time frame, but it seems to us that here too the input must come from both sides.
- **Economic development.** In one way or another, developments on the island are often and (too) easily promoted with the motivation that something would be good for the development of the island. The relevant question then - and according to us not only in relation to the point of the excavations - is: *to whom do these developments benefit?* In our view, employment is too easily cited as a trump card in this regard while a closer look at the development often results in the revenue disappearing into the pockets of investors and the Statian is not necessarily any the wiser from all this. When the SHRC organises hearings on behalf of the people of Statia, we expect that this will be discussed in more detail.

I would like to hear from you.

Kind regards,
together with a group of concerned Statians,

J.H.T. (Jan) Meijer MSc MBA,
Bellevue Road 4, Upper Round Hill,
St. Eustatius, Caribbean Netherlands.

Cc: *Chairman and members of the Kingdom Relations Committee of the Lower House
Cultural Heritage Agency
Members of the Island Council of St. Eustatius*

¹ See <https://www.statiagovernment.com/news-and-tenders/news/2021/07/14/statia-suspends-archeological-dig-at-the-airport>