

Dear Mr Van Raak,

Let me begin by stating that I do not possess all wisdom as well. What I do know is that an initial "neglect" seems to have made way for another.

From a history that goes back a long time, the independent, administrative power of the island of St. Eustatius is small to very small. I see the following factors playing a role:

1. Knowledge is not shared with each other; objective news outlets are lacking (no press).
2. The individual who talks that loudest and with conviction seems to be given authority and others should shut their mouths
3. Listening and working together are not highly developed skills.
4. The education level is low.

Expectations (of the administrative intervention) were high a year ago, but now, a year later, people's expectations have not been met. A transparent decision-making process is still not in place.

By law, a social advisory council has been set up, which hardly ever meets. Requests from council members to meet accepted and the agenda - set by Franco and Stegers - is usually filled with relatively unimportant matters such as the restoration of the cemeteries.

In the meantime, a Cooperative Platform has also been set up by former administrators and politicians. There seems to be some consultation with them - also on a more substantive level - although it is said this board is not very transparent.

The letter from Knops of 14 November is still not formally available in English here, but the Statian population has understood that local elections have been postponed for the time being.

I provide the following example of the lack of information on the island. In response to parliamentary questions, I read that the construction of the prison in the centre of Oranjestad has been definitively abandoned (which seems to me to be in accordance with the wishes of the population). Another location is being sought. However, I can't find any of this in the local decision making process (looking at <http://statiagovernment.com/programs.html>).

What to do now is the question. Going straight to the media seems a little confrontational and not contributing to a constructive atmosphere. I think it would be good if Mr Franco and Mr Stegers were less autocratic/authoritarian and more focused on real consultation followed by a transparent decision-making process. It seems to me that the Lower House, in its role as controller of the government, should "adjust" State Secretary Knops in his "coaching" of our Government Commissioner and his observer, in such a way that they also offer the same transparency and provision of information to the population of St. Eustatius, as State Secretary Knops is obliged to offer to the Lower House.

I am hoping that these type of actions can be initiated by you. If you are able, many thanks in advance. It would be my pleasure to provide more information if need be. I have included my contact information at the bottom of this e-mail.

Yours sincerely,

J.H.T. Meijer MBA,  
teacher Gwendoline van Puttenschool,  
living on St. Eustatius since July 2014.

e-mail => [j.m@jhtm.nl](mailto:j.m@jhtm.nl)  
whatsapp => +599 319 1638