

To the President of the Lower House of the States General
P.O. Box 20018
2500 EA The Hague

Date: 25 February 2019

Subject: Response to letters from Mr J.H.T. Meijer concerning the improvement of public administration and elections in St. Eustatius

You hereby receive my response to the letters sent by Mr. J.H.T. Meijer to the Standing Committee on Kingdom Relations concerning the improvement of the Public Administration of St. Eustatius and elections on St. Eustatius. You requested my reaction by letters of 13 November and 17 December 2018, with characteristics 2018Z20932/2018D61175 and 2018Z24120/2018D60997.

In the letter concerning the improvement of the Public Administration, Mr. J.H.T. Meijer asks "*With which set of measures will the current administration achieve an improved living environment and an improved administration in the coming period?*" and "*How will it be ensured that the population really has a say in these measures and their priorities?*".

To answer the above questions, I would like to refer you to the enclosed progress reports on St. Eustatius that have been sent to the Lower House of Parliament. In the progress reports, extensive consideration is given to the measures that the current board has taken or will take to improve the situation on St. Eustatius.

In the letter concerning the elections on St. Eustatius, Mr. J.H.T. Meijer raised the issue that "*the State Secretary would be pleased if letters to the Lower House, concerning St. Eustatius, were to be sent in both the English and Dutch language*".

In the Wol-BES English is included as an official language on St. Eustatius. This allows schools to teach in Dutch and English and communication with the government can take place in both languages. In the European Netherlands, English is not an official language. Government agencies are therefore not obliged to offer documents in English. As previously written in response to the motion by Hachchi and Van Toorenborg, dated 28 November 2013 (reference 2014-0000118302), documents that are important to citizens will be translated. I share this view, because it is very important that the citizens of St. Eustatius are well informed about the progress of the administrative intervention. For this reason, the Temporary Act on the neglect of tasks and the progress reports have been published in English. To support the departments, the communication department of the Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland (RCN) advises on which documents should be translated. The RCN also offers the departments the translation of documents as a basic service.

The State Secretary of the Interior and Kingdom Relations,

R.W. Knops