

Dear Chairman and members of the Kingdom Relations Commission,

Because your "meeting" has been moved from April 22nd to April 29th, I also have some space to share my most recent thoughts with you. First of all, I would like to express my thanks for the conversation with Mrs. Antje Diertens of your committee. There may not be much news for her below.

When it comes to what has improved in the life of the Statian from the moment of the intervention, I will mention two concepts that in any case concisely reflect my feelings in this respect: tranquillity and non-transparency. There are no more violent arguments in the Island Council (of course because the members of the Island Council, as well as other local administrative officials, have been removed from their positions). Actually, nothing has returned in its place. So yes, nice and quiet (although there is also a restless undercurrent to be seen: people wondering where all this should lead), but whatever else happened, it remained hidden from the public eye. In that sense I call it "non-transparency". The government commissioners almost didn't consult with the ordinary Statian and I sincerely don't know how the civil service has improved. Given a certain amount of suspicion and mistrust that the Statian has developed over a long period of time, I do not suppose that 'suddenly' things will act differently. In that sense my expectations are not too high.

A phased return to the "normal" situation is understandably seen as a form of The Hague distrust and as an extension of colonial behaviour. I say "understandably" because 1) the legislation has not been properly discussed with the Statians (I have already argued once that the consultation with the Social Advisory Council was a sham) and 2) the phasing has not been defined in time but is subject to conditions (which means that the timeline can be stretched to The Hague's liking).

I suggest a faster approach. Recognize that not much has been achieved in the past two years. And also recognise that in the short term not many things will be achieved all of a sudden. Nevertheless, go back to "full self-government", at least to the island government as it existed before the administrative intervention. In short, restore the situation not in phases but as a turnkey project. Agree with the civil servants, the island councillors, the deputies and the governor that whatever is done or agreed upon, the legislation (especially WolBES and FinBES) is always the leading framework. In theory, such an agreement is not necessary because it is self-evident. Well, of course it has gone wrong there and doesn't the oath formulation also mention "obedience to the laws"?

Then propose governance agreements as also done with Saba and Bonaire. These agreements must of course be concrete (performance obligations and not effort obligations) and related to a moment in time (just like the SMART formulation of goals in general; as the theory says: specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic and time-bound). And agreements must be made after discussing them together. I don't want to be too emphatic as a Statian (let the Statians do that themselves) but on <http://www.statia.nu/> I made a set-up of what seems important to me under 'Future' some time ago. Again, I am not exhaustive in this and neither are the accents I have laid out blissfully. What is

important is that there is consultation and that agreements come out of it. I have stated on the website, among other things, that in principle as much as possible should be organised equally in the different parts of the Kingdom, unless geographical aspects or typically island aspects make that impossible or undesirable.

Making agreements back and forth, recording them in a covenant and then taking a step back and leaving the implementation to the local government. If all that seems just a little too rigorous, I would suggest that the government commissioner be retained for some time, as a driving instructor with an aspirant on his or her way to his or her driver's license: not himself behind the wheel but capable of applying the brakes.

Note: And if I could place an accent in the administrative agreements yet to be made, I would draw attention to footnote 8 of the Council of State document in relation to the present bill. Drop the administrative monstrosity Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland with a Rijksvertegenwoordiger and introduce direct lines of the three islands with the departments of The Hague. This also does justice to the uniqueness of the three mutually different islands.

I conclude by wishing you much courage and wisdom. I think it will take some courage to recognize that the administrative intervention so far has not yielded so much. Wisdom is needed to proceed wisely.

Kind regards,

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Note: This afternoon we experienced a webinar organized by CXC about the changed circumstances due to the coronavirus under which the school exams will be taken. The consultation form "webinar" seems to me to be an excellent alternative to the townhall meeting on our island. A consideration...