

Dear Chairman and members of the Kingdom Relations Commission,

Just a few quotes from The Daily Herald of Tuesday 2 June 2020, following the government's progress report to the House of Representatives, in preparation for the plenary debate on Wednesday 3 June:

Knops explained that on their appointment the government commissioners had immediately indicated that they would continuously invest in good relations with the population through dialogue and open, transparent communication.

"Mutual respect and listening well to the arguments of another person are necessary for good dialogue. Good dialogue contributes to the quality of decision-making and results in greater support for decisions that are made," stated Knops, adding that Van Rij and Francis also strived for continuous contact and dialogue with Saba and Bonaire, and with The Hague.

"The period leading up to the elections requires a continuous focus on dialogue with the people and transparency towards residents. This dialogue is already taking place in an intensive manner," stated Knops.

At the same time, the public entity and the Dutch government will have to continue building good governance and working on the projects to improve the situation on the island.

Apart from the regular COVID19 information on the radio and the occasional backroom meeting (with, among others, former politicians), there is absolutely no dialogue with the population, and (therefore) absolutely no open and transparent communication! No, also the consultation with the Social Advisory Council is not part of this open and transparent communication.

In short, the theory that Knops proclaims in the newspaper is beautiful and "out of the book" but it has nothing at all to do with everyday practice on St. Eustatius. "Not at all" is on the other side of the spectrum that leads to "intensive dialogue" that Knops - according to The Daily Herald - mentions.

In my last quotation it says that work still needs to be done on projects. I wonder whether the project result is paramount, or the fact that the Statian is learning (from the Dutch) how to use this practice as a guideline for the future. I'm afraid the first (in which case the people of Statia learn nothing).

So much for a brief comment, which I hope you will take note of before the plenary debate tomorrow.

Kind regards,

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