

Dear Chairman and Members of the Kingdom Relations Committee,

The recent celebration of Emancipation Day - July 1 - which focuses on the abolition of slavery, led me to the following.

To date, I regularly raise issues of concern. Sometimes it is about the BSN and the DigiD, another time it is about the inter island connectivity (like public transport), sometimes it is about the abominable postal delivery, or the financial services on the island or the "ijkpunt bestaansminimum" with an explanation from the side of the government that seems very plausible but at the same time has only led to more poverty in recent years (so in fact it is based on nonsense; here I have the National Ombudsman on my side).

At the celebration of Emancipation Day, the image came to my mind that discrimination is still plentiful! I stick to two articles in the Constitution, namely article 1 *All persons in the Netherlands are treated equally in equal cases. Discrimination because of religion, philosophy of life, political opinion, race, gender or on whatever ground is not allowed* and article 132a, paragraph 4 *For these public entities rules can be set and other specific measures can be taken in view of special circumstances that make these public entities substantially different from the European part of the Netherlands.*

If this view - i.e. the Caribbean Netherlands is discriminated against and the Statian is considered a second-class Dutchman - is to be fought out on the cutting edge (for example, legally or in the media) the discussion will probably focus on the last part of Article 132a, paragraph 4. In other words: *in what way does the situation in the public bodies differ substantially from the circumstances in the European Netherlands?*

In principle, the government will take the position that just about everything is different from the situation in the European Netherlands (*so that it only needs to free up as little money as possible to achieve a truly just and equal situation in a broad sense*). While, in my opinion, it would be good to substantiate that there is only an exhaustive enumeration of factors that really give rise to an essential difference with the European Netherlands, which necessitates and justifies its own island regulations.

For example, it is not difficult to see that the tropical climate with things like hurricanes and volcanoes, as well as coral, will be an indisputable distinguishing aspect. Also, the traffic situation on the island of St. Eustatius is indisputably distinctive from that of European Netherlands. The English language on the island through which an educational system different from European Netherlands has been implemented also seems to me to be rather indisputably distinctive. So are we there? At first glance I can't think of anything else, but it seems to me that it would be a point of negotiation to agree on such an overview (between the public entity and European Netherlands).

The fact that the French overseas territories are simply as French as France itself makes it much less obvious to me that in many other matters, such as social legislation and financial infrastructure, the

trump card "substantially distinct from European Netherlands" would be drawn (which the government with a frugal eye on the wallet is happy to do). Here I would therefore like to state "*the European Netherlands discriminates against the Caribbean Netherlands*".

I would like to lead the discussion in the direction that the principle of equality in the Netherlands (i.e. in both the European Netherlands and the Caribbean Netherlands) is further and especially fairly elaborated. And in my opinion, this would start with not having two different Civil Codes.

Is this a point for the Kingdom Relations Committee? Or would such a shift in paradigm rather be a point that should be part of a coalition agreement? In any case, I would like to see the Netherlands become as equal as possible with only those laws and regulations for the St. Eustatius public entity, which the European Netherlands and the public entity decide on together in proper consultation, with Article 132a (4) as the criterion.

It seems to me that in the event that this paradigm shift can actually be realized, the separate "things" such as BSN, DigiD, etc. will automatically find their place as pieces of a puzzle in the larger framework.

I would like to hear a slightly more substantive response than just "taken note of".

Kind regards,

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W <http://statia.nu/> (with all my letters to the Lower House together in one file)

Note: In closing, a reflection on my part. I sometimes think to myself "if I wanted to sharpen my administrative skills now, who would I choose as my teacher?". Without going deeply into this question now, I would like to exclude at least some. Those who are currently part of the country's government or our Executive Council I would certainly not choose. It seems to me that the curriculum would then have too many accents like 'Quod licet Iovi non licet bovi' or double standards. While this curriculum should of course stimulate a government that serves the people and is fair and just in all cases. In any case it sets a good example with the basic idea "what you do not want to be done to you, do not do it to anyone else either".