

The Hague, September 6, 2022.

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committees KR and VWS,

That the website of the hospital on St. Eustatius has not been updated is a euphemism: as of July 2020 nothing seems to have been published on it. And also on the website of the public body of St. Eustatius I see nothing about any 'lessons learned' or otherwise as a result of the death of Mr. Regilio Pinas on April 1, 2022. On April 5 there was a silent (protest) march and the board of the hospital promised transparency, betterment and whatnot. Nice words, but that's all. There has been an investigation into this death but nothing has come out of it. This fits into a picture: the Statian government likes nothing better than to come out with good news and for the rest the lid goes on the cover-up. Not only in this case but in everything. And what does it matter: after all, there is no independent press on the island, the island is only three thousand inhabitants large with virtually no impact in an electoral sense (seen in the context of 'the Netherlands'). In short, keep it quiet, sand about it, no more talking about it: those are the ingredients of the media policy of the 'transparent' governmental and public organizations that the island has. Then there should be a central government that stands up for the weak in society.

It has been promised that the referral of patients to specialists will be based on medical arguments but in practice little has changed from the past. The financial arguments still weigh heavily(er) in the decision to refer patients. The local doctors in the hospital do not have to undergo training (*BIG registration? We don't do that. Oh yes, we have formally lobbied together for an exemption so that the paperwork is correct.*¹). Without the report having been made public, it is abundantly clear to me that the delaying factors surrounding Mr. Pinas' deployment played a part in his death. You will not hear me say that otherwise he would still be alive: I simply do not know. But that not everything was done to save his life: of that I am convinced. And the fact that nothing has been revealed only strengthens my conviction. The responsible Ministry of Health has a reputation to uphold here as well: the facts about the mouth guard deal do not come out and even the law on openness of the administration seems to be a paper tiger in this Ministry: apparently the preference goes to the payment of a penalty or fine instead of "proper administration", in this case the (timely) disclosure of information that could possibly be harmful to responsible officials. That ordinary citizens die is a kind of 'collateral damage'. In other

¹ On St. Eustatius the 'exemption' is seen as equivalent to the actual BIG registration. So in fact nothing is done about - for example - refresher courses, nobody complains about that because 'exemption' (which is seen and experienced as a 'BIG registration'). How misleading can you be (as a Statian healthcare organization), or: how easily The Hague lets you pull the wool over the eyes.

words: images must not be damaged and that people die as a result: well, you'll always have small things. This is not a government of which I always thought: it is there for the common good and to protect the weak in society.

I would like to see that - in the context of this letter: 'with regard to the policy area of VWS' - it does not matter whether you are a patient in the Dutch Caribbean, including St. Eustatius, or - by way of example - in Amsterdam or Leiden (where academic hospitals are available). To date, I see Statian patients depending on care by local general practitioners who would not even get by in the European Netherlands. *Why doesn't St. Eustatius employ full-fledged, BIG-registered general practitioners who meet the Dutch legal requirements? Or an alternative in which doctors must meet quality requirements such as mandatory and periodic training in current developments and techniques (instead of something as stupid as an exemption from the mandatory BIG registration when in the Caribbean Netherlands).*

Furthermore - and finally - I believe that everyone can see what I also see, but all officials who have some responsibility in this policy area look away from it!

I would like to see you assert your parliamentary, controlling role also when it comes to the medical policy area as far as the Caribbean Netherlands are concerned. Thank you in advance!

Kind regards,

J.H.T. (Jan) Meijer MSc MBA,

A Cornelis Houtmanstraat 9-b,
2593 RD The Hague.

E jhtm.nl@gmail.com

W <http://statia.nu> or <http://statia.nu/nl>

cc: *Committee KR of the Senate*
National Ombudsman
Health Care and Youth Inspectorate
family of the deceased Mr. Regilio Pinas