

The Hague, May 21, 2023.

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee on Kingdom Relations of the TK and EK,

Just a brief reflection on recent events.

Money flows to the Caribbean

On May 16, koninkrijksrelaties.nl reported that the Netherlands is donating 200 million euros to the autonomous countries of Curaçao, Aruba and Sint Maarten. Those countries would be left to fend for themselves after the 10-10-10 debt restructuring. How this relates to the fact that the inhabitants of the Caribbean Netherlands (Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba) are considered second-class Dutch citizens in the country of the Netherlands (no unemployment benefits, a separate, not yet established social minimum, the US dollar as currency, second-class health care, etc.) is beyond me. And then the party of which the Secretary of State is a member (D66) still holds the credo "let everyone be free, but no one fall." This discrimination in the country Netherlands should be non-existent (just like a social minimum for the Caribbean Netherlands, while such a minimum exists for the country Netherlands).

Appointment deputy government commissioner in St. Eustatius

With all due respect to the person involved (he can't help it...) and despite the fact that the regulations in force do not appear to have been violated, a closer acquaintance with the intended official and the Island Council prior to the appointment would be a respectful gesture. If the colonial behavior of The Hague towards the residents of St. Eustatius may now truly be considered a thing of the past (after the apologies of the Dutch government) then this course of action by the Central Government is not really the expected course of action. Much more disrespectful could not really be the case.

Moreover, the timing of the appointment is downright unfortunate: the expectation that the "governor" will be appointed in the foreseeable future (leaving the government commissioner with no role anyway) is all over the place. You can wait for the criticism that someone had to be helped to a sunny job (and that detracts from the person involved). But yes, respect does not seem to be a widely held concept in this government....

Sincerely,

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cc: *National Ombudsman*