

The Hague, November 18, 2023.

Dear members of TK and EK,

I recently read on *dossierkoninkrijksrelaties.nl* that the Council of Ministers has removed an obstacle when it comes to offering (by banks) euro accounts to BES citizens. If this said that soon residents of Amsterdam will also be able to open a euro account, you would be surprised: *of course* residents of Amsterdam can open such an account at a Dutch bank: *after all, anyone in the Netherlands can!*

So, no ... Free after George Orwell, you could say that the Constitution probably assumes that all Dutch people will be treated equally under equal circumstances, but this article once again makes it clear that the European Dutchman seems to be slightly more "equal" than the Caribbean Dutchman.

It is true that a social minimum has recently been established for the Caribbean Netherlands, but one must then ask why a social minimum for the Caribbean Netherlands at all, when such a thing already exists for the country of the Netherlands. Do we also do a social minimum for East Groningen, South Limburg, the Randstad or any other region? No, after all, it all concerns the Netherlands. Oh no, in European Holland we are all measured by the same social yardstick. Logical, you would think. *But the Caribbean Dutchman is really a different kind of (second-class) Dutchman.*

Since October 10, 2010, Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba belong to the country of the Netherlands (while the other three islands in the Caribbean Sea continue as autonomous countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands). Subsequently, all kinds of things that are quite normal in (European) Netherlands are different or non-existent for the Caribbean Dutchman. Why is there no unemployment benefit in the Caribbean Netherlands? Why is the legal minimum wage of a different (read: lower) level? Why do we have an AOV (in the Caribbean Netherlands) while in the rest of the Netherlands there is the (more comfortable, broader) AOW? Why is the US dollar the currency in the Caribbean Netherlands while the rest of the Netherlands "just" has the euro? Why is there different (BES) legislation for the Caribbean Netherlands at all?

For the record: In total, there are only about thirty thousand Caribbean Dutch (living in the Caribbean Netherlands). There seems to me to be no rational reason to put the Caribbean Netherlands in second place for about thirteen years. Yet that is the distressing reality. At this time of elections, I would like to mention that all parties are committed to security of existence and the elimination of poverty, but for the past thirteen years the government has not missed an opportunity to put the Caribbean Netherlands behind the European Netherlands. In plain Dutch, that is called *institutional discrimination*. *P.S. Should you wish to object "but steps are being made" I would argue "those are then too small steps, which have taken too long and have been for thirteen years".*

*I hope someone-of-influence takes notice!*

Sincerely,

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cc: *National Ombudsman*