

Dear chairman and members of the House of Representatives' Committee on Kingdom Relations,

Following on from the earlier transmission of my findings, I would once again like to make a case for an improved public administration on St. Eustatius. For the record, Messrs Franco and Stegers seem to have the best interests for the future of the island at heart. The most important shortcoming that I would like to highlight in this way concerns transparency in their actions.

In my opinion, there is a lack of communication with the people. Every now and then, there is talk on the radio, but first of all, the message does not stand up well and, moreover, it is often responses to questions that arrive at the radio by telephone.

What is absolutely missing (and in my opinion DAT is the big shortcoming) is a pro-active attitude in which in the (medium) long term plans with objectives and resulting activities, set out in a global and well-organized time frame, are announced. These should preferably not be bulky documents because they are poorly read but one or two pages per point of attention (or: plan) seems sufficient and effective to me. These documents must then be updated periodically as time goes by.

And then it should not get bogged down on the roads that are being improved, the cabling that goes from above-ground to underground or the effects of the erosion that are being solved. No, ALL activities that lead to an improved quality of life for the residents and an improved (effective, transparent, non-corruptive and responsible) public administration must be included in this (master) plan.

Although the website of the administration (statiagovernment.com) seems to have been put back into use, it is still a messy whole. If you search this website under the heading (on the left) "Notices & Services", you will now see the minutes of the Executive Council, but these are relatively meaningless as long as the underlying documents are not available. The implementation reports - which by definition are of course a retrospective - are also available nowadays, but the (master) plan is still lacking, with or without sub-plans on how the coming year or perhaps more than that will be filled with activities aimed at improvement.

Although there is the impression that the current government has done the best for the island and its inhabitants, its quality does not actually rise above that of the government that has since been removed. After all, they remain back rooms in which decisions are or are not made. The implementation report takes place in the direction of the ministry or the political leadership and an active and clear flow of information (and in particular focused on what is to come, instead of what has taken place) in the direction of the residents has not been achieved to date.

I believe that the confidence in politics in general and in the public administration that is ultimately shaped by 'The Hague' has not increased in practice, and it is my firm expectation that nothing will come of it in this way.

The ultimate question, therefore, is "*what set of measures will the current government use in the coming period (one or two years, or possibly with a wider horizon) to achieve an improved living environment and improved governance*", and of course the question "*in what way will it be ensured that the population really has a say in these measures and their priorities*". There is no doubt in my mind that the administration has the last word in this participation, but the involvement of the islanders must, in my view, take a substantial form.

Could I ask you to take account of this concern in your deliberations? Thank you very much in advance.

Yours sincerely,

J.H.T. (Jan) Meijer MBA, Bellevueroad 4, Upper Round Hill,
Saint Eustatius, Dutch Caribbean.

Note: May I ask you again to send me your confirmation of receipt by e-mail? A letter is the first sin of the paper, moreover, the chance that a paper letter will arrive here before Christmas is very small.