

To:

- Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to the Director of Secondary Education
- Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for Director of Higher Education and Study Financing
- Chairman and members of the Education, Culture and Science Committee of the House of Representatives
- National Ombudsman
- Commission on Human Rights
- Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland, Department of Education, Culture and Science
- Government Commissioner Saint Eustatius

St. Eustatius, November 19, 2020.

Dear addressees,

For some time now, I have been drawing attention to the recognition of secondary education on St. Eustatius (in general, but certainly in relation to further education at HBO in the European Netherlands). Six years ago (!) the State Secretary of OCW informed the House of Representatives that the language of instruction on St. Eustatius will be English and that the HAVO and VMBO courses which were running until then will be phased out in favor of the examinations as organized by the CXC.

A CXC decision was announced a few months ago and in February/March 2020 a draft of this decision has been published (see <https://internetconsultatie.nl/> and search for "cxc"). After that it became (deafeningly) quiet in this file. In any case, there is no CXC decision yet. In the draft presented in consultation at the time, Article 25 mentions a date of entry into force of 1 August 2020. I consider this date *late* in the light of the fact that two years before the exam a profile choice is made by the students (in line with what happened at the time at the HAVO) but *on time* in the light of the exams held in 2020.

But the CXC Decision is still not there and I hear noises that this will not happen before or around August 1, 2021. Two related concerns I would like to share with you:

- The CXC Decision as it came into force in February/March does not define profiles as is done for HAVO/WVO and VMBO (in WVO BES resp. Regeling Profielen VMBO). In my comments on the submitted concept (dated February 19, 2020), I make a proposal for a set of profiles, as these could be in line with the model applicable in the European Netherlands. Now that I have no further information about the CXC Decision, I keep in mind that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science does not want to regulate the acceptance of failed students from Sint centrally, but leaves that to the individual educational institutions. With this I think I see a legal inequality, against the background of article 1 of the Constitution, where Dutch nationals coming from St. Eustatius may be 'weighed' in a different way than Dutch nationals who 'just' attended a secondary school situated in the European Netherlands.

- In fact, I think I already observe this legal inequality. I know a student (from St. Eustatius) who is studying at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences and who is now, after some initial problems, normally participating in the study and since September 2020 also receives study financing through DUO. But I also know a student (also from St. Eustatius) who was not allowed to register at Fontys Hogeschool Eindhoven as a 'student' (because the CSEC-diploma, entirely through no fault of the student and the school on St. Eustatius, is not yet available ¹) but as a 'cursist', as a result of which - as it turns out - for the time being no study financing (with accompanying public transport facilities) can be obtained.

I would like to draw your attention to both points of concern. Attention that should lead to

- the profiles for the CSEC are defined *centrally* and connect to the model of profiles as is valid in the European Netherlands, which ensures that the same environment is created for CSEC students as that which applies to European Netherlands students when they are enrolled in education in the European Netherlands;
- to organize all other facilities, including in particular study grants, in such a way that CSEC students can benefit from these facilities in the same way as students with a European Dutch preparatory education.

Furthermore, it is of course desirable to have an (adequate) CXC Decision available as soon as possible.

Thank you in advance and with kind regards,

J.H.T. (Jan) Meijer MSc MBA,
Bellevue Road 4, Upper Round Hill,
St. Eustatius, Dutch Caribbean.

cc:

- *Chairman and members of the Committee on Kingdom Relations of the Lower House of Parliament*
- *Inspector General of Education*

¹ This problem is structural and not incidental. Even in the situation where COVID19 does not play a role, the CXC organization's diploma and marks will not be available until after the summer vacations. In any case not in May/June/July as is the case at secondary schools in the European Netherlands.