

To:

- Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to the Director of Secondary Education
- Chairman and members of the Education, Culture and Science Committee of the House of Representatives
- Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland, Department of Education, Culture and Science
- Government commissioner on St. Eustatius

Saint Eustatius, January 8, 2021.

Dear addressees,

First of all: thank you for your reaction (your = minocw/director of secondary education) of January 5, 2021 (your reference number 26357481) <sup>1</sup>. I would like to respond to it.

You have set up your letter in three points. In that order I will react.

Of course I understand that the development of a new CXC Decision takes time, and of course I am aware of the Temporary Decision [...] which you have quoted. That does not mean, however, that this development does not have to take years. When I see that the legislation needed to enable an intervention in the board of St. Eustatius can be realized in "days" and the legislation related to the fight against the pandemic and the introduction of vaccination is realized in "days" or "weeks" rather than in "months", I do not think you need to have studied for it, to say that six years has been a rather (read: too) long period. The file simply ended up at the bottom of a pile and when the final exams of the first cohort of students presented themselves, it was necessary to take this file in hand. None of this can be reversed, but in your experience - I think I have to understand your letter - it all went smoothly and there is really nothing wrong at all.

In the original proposal concerning the CXC Decision as it was submitted for consultation, it was still planned that the date of entry into force would be 1 August 2020; even late, but that was not achieved anyway. So it didn't all go so "neatly". And if you state that this did not lead to problems in the implementation practice, you are downplaying the reported problems in Eindhoven and Rotterdam. Of course, all things that have been picked up by now, but certainly not by you in the first place! And you have contributed nothing at all to prevent these problems. But anyway, the world is turning, we have to look ahead. So far, I'm going with you...

Turning to the issue of not including profiles in the CXC Decision, you have taken the following position. The CXC educational institution does not have profiles; the schools are free to cluster subjects and nothing else is mandatory. All this does not alter the fact that the connection to higher education is guaranteed. After all, the school diploma gives admission to secondary education in the European Netherlands. That school diploma is awarded when a certain minimum of subjects is rated at the appropriate level (I, II or III or a six when the subject is Dutch). If I interpret your "reassuring" words correctly, someone who receives a school diploma on St. Eustatius on the basis of a random package of CXC subjects (without - for example - 'Physics') in the European Netherlands will be admitted to - again by way of example - a hbo-education 'civil engineering' or the higher maritime

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<sup>1</sup> By the way, it seems a bit cumbersome to me to entrust a courier (a Station official of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) with the personal delivery of your letter. As I mail my letter to you from my e-mail address j.m@jhtm.nl, you can of course also reach me by that way. Your courier informed me that the letter will also be delivered by mail, which seems superfluous to me. Moreover, experience has taught me that this can easily take weeks to months.

school (for which, to my knowledge, a minimum havo-NT profile is required). It seems to me to be a development that you did not mean, but - as I'm sure you will agree - that I may deduce from your letter. *I would like to plead for a set of profiles (as proposed in my contribution during the internet consultation) to be defined and established at the level of the CXC Decision.*

Then the last point: concerning the alleged legal inequality. As you put it, it is now even the opposite as I saw it. If you allow students with a CXC background and a 'school diploma' unlimited access to higher professional education, they are at an advantage over European Dutch students who still need a diploma with a certain profile in order to be able to participate in certain programs. Again, this seems undesirable and incorrect to me, but strictly speaking it is also discrimination (but of the European Dutch student).

In what you refer to as the 'third point', you speak of "an unfortunate situation in which, as a result of the corona pandemic, it became clear only after the start of the academic year whether the candidate in question had passed his exams with the required results". I can help you out of the dream. It is *structural* that those results are known later (than at the start of the academic year). That has nothing at all to do with the corona pandemic. I reported this fact to you earlier (see the footnote in my letter of 19 November 2020).

*Writing this, I wonder at what level the contact with CXC is actually made and maintained.* The fact that you refer me to officials at your ministry in the Caribbean at the Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland gives me the impression that on a more strategic or policy level there is no contact at all with CXC (not with MinOCW, nor with DUO or CVTE). *This seems to me to be an obvious omission that - to my firm conviction - must be eliminated as a matter of urgency.*

In summary, I recognize a reaction based on a combination of denial, downplaying and the desire to keep it 'small' (and perhaps partly on unfamiliarity with CXC). The latter - keeping it 'small' - I derive from your request to me to address myself to the ministry (in The Hague or in the Caribbean) when continuing the exchange of ideas. However, I would also like to keep them, to whom the minister is accountable (i.e. the House of Representatives), informed.

May I ask you to respond in particular to my plea to still establish profiles at the level of the CXC Decision (i.c. the level of legislation and regulations), as well as to achieve strategic or policy anchoring of the contact with CXC at minOCW, DUO, CVTE or otherwise (if this is indeed not yet the case).

Kind regards,

J.H.T. (Jan) Meijer MSc MBA,  
Bellevue Road 4, Upper Round Hill,  
St. Eustatius, Dutch Caribbean  
E [j.m@jhtm.nl](mailto:j.m@jhtm.nl)

Cc:

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