

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee on Education, Culture and Science,

It is now April 12, 2021 and if I look at the agenda of the upcoming procedural meeting (April 15), I see agenda item 82, entitled "*Response to committee request for a letter drawing attention to the introduction of the CXC system on St. Eustatius*". Only a few days ago I saw this same item listed as agenda item 74, so that numbering may still shift in the next three days.

In terms of content there are a few developments. The most important is surely the publication of the "*Saba Comprehensive School and Gwendoline van Puttenschool BES Decree*" on April 2 in the Bulletin of Acts, Orders and Decrees of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In the run-up to this official publication it was still referred to as the *CXC Decree* and as such it entered the internet consultation in February 2020.

My main criticism was that the Decree did not formally exist and so this has now been resolved as of April 2. Although I have yet to look at it in more detail, I see in the Explanatory Memorandum under item 7 ('Consultation') what, if anything, has been done with the comments submitted; as yet, I am not entirely convinced that all inconsistency and imperfections have been remedied. I would like to come back to this in more detail.

A clear choice was made not to define profiles in order to pursue conformity with the European Dutch educational model (in which - for example - the profiles CM, EM, NG and NT apply to the HAVO and all have a legal basis). On the one hand I do understand that the two schools in question may not be able to accommodate all the profiles, which of course they should be able to do if the basis is more firmly established. On the other hand, I still find it a decision with a high Pontius Pilate content. I would like to explain this point.

The minister states that the CXC model cannot be applied on a one-to-one basis to the European Dutch educational model. Therefore, the (two) schools are fairly free in the design of the curriculum. And the HBO and MBO institutions in the European Netherlands can decide for themselves whether or not a student meets the requirements of a program. In this way, you create maximum flexibility but no clarity, and if the desired connection cannot be made, the minister washes his hands of the problem. After all, it is *either* the schools that have set up the wrong curriculum *or* the HBO and MBO institutions in the European Netherlands that have set their requirements too high.

The minister also states: "*Mr. Meijer shares his concerns with my ministry and other agencies on a regular basis. An attempt has been made to address these concerns with a substantive explanation of how the CXC system works on St. Eustatius, see Appendix 1*". That annex states, among other things, "*Pupils with a school certificate under the Decree therefore do not become dependent on the admission policy of individual educational institutions in European Netherlands*". The explanatory notes to the Decree state, among other things, "*The school diploma confers a right of admission to certain types and levels of education in the European Netherlands, for example, a right of admission to*

*an intermediate vocational education (mbo-4) course or to a higher vocational education (hbo) course. In case of an admission right, the school is obliged to admit the student".* This does sound reassuring but this provision is in the "explanatory notes" and not in the Decree itself (as it can be consulted via, for example, <https://wetten.overheid.nl>).

Worry removed or not: the current reality teaches me that - especially because of the late availability of CXC diploma and CXC lists of grades - still (!) problems are experienced with registration at the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, Arnhem University of Applied Sciences and Nijmegen University of Applied Sciences and Fontys University of Applied Sciences Eindhoven. For the record, this is not an imperfection in the school organization nor can it be attributed to the COVID19 pandemic; it is simply a *structural* point: the cycle of things in the CXC organization is simply not in phase with the same cycle in the European Netherlands.

I myself do not know if I am being exhaustive here (with my list of schools), but this list is based on reports reaching me from students in the exam class of the Gwendoline van Puttenschool on St. Eustatius. It seems to me therefore that the communication from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has not yet led to all educational institutions in the European Netherlands implementing the same acceptance policy and the reluctance to accept Stavian students seems to be as great as ever.

I would like to ask you to keep your finger firmly on the pulse of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and in any case to make the above-mentioned acceptance policy (of Stavian students) at colleges of higher education and vocational schools uniform and to provide an *open attitude towards acceptance* (even though the school certificate may not be available until mid-October 2021). With the batch that left the Gwendoline van Puttenschool at the end of last school year (2019/2020), all did not go smoothly; will we have a better experience with the students leaving the school this year in order to spread their wings (e.g. to European Netherlands)? For now, the omens are not favorable but fortunately there are still some weeks to go....

Kind regards,

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*Cc: Chairman and members of the Kingdom Relations Committee*