

To: Chairman and members of the OCW Committee

St. Eustatius, April 21, 2021.

Your procedural meeting of last 15 April will be continued tomorrow - Thursday 22 April 2021. It is with a view to that meeting (i.e. agenda item 68) that I hereby provide you with an update on the state of affairs.

With regard to the CXC oriented education on St. Eustatius some things have already been communicated in the period behind us. The most recent development is the official publication of the [Besluit Saba Comprehensive School en Gwendoline van Puttenschool BES](#). I would like to draw your attention to this.

Article 20 of this Decree states with regard to CSEC that partial certificates and diplomas are made available to students who have met the set requirements. Article 24 then defines who will receive a so-called school diploma.¹

So far, it is fairly clear. Then there is the Explanatory Memorandum (which can be found in the above-mentioned Official Gazette, but not in the consolidated version at wetten.nl). Under the heading "School Diploma and Forwarding Opportunities" of this memorandum, various cases are elaborated. In the context of the present document - aimed at transfer to (English-language) HBO study programmes in the European Netherlands - I will pick out a few here.

In the following cases, the school awards a school certificate to the pupil who has completed the CSEC certificate with at least five subjects with the grades I, II, III and who has passed the examination for the in-depth subject Dutch, in accordance with the ministerial regulation to this decree, with at least a grade 6.0.

With this school certificate, the student can be admitted to higher vocational education, i.e. to subsequent education for which a HAVO certificate or comparable diploma is required.

The above indicates that for the in-depth subject Dutch at least a 6.0 must be obtained. The 6.0 means that the student must actually have achieved a six or higher. A 5.9 cannot be rounded up to a 6.

The student who did not take the exam for the in-depth subject Dutch or who achieved a score lower than 6.0 for this subject will not receive a school certificate and therefore has no right of admission. This student can, based on the obtained CXC diploma, still enter into secondary

¹ The BES Regulation on the Designation of Diplomas and the Regulation on Application and Admission to Higher Education will be amended. Article 24 provides the basis for this.

education on Bonaire or in the European Netherlands, because the CXC diploma indicates the required work and thinking level. It is then in principle up to the receiving institution to judge whether the diploma or certificate is equivalent to the admission requirements that apply in the European Netherlands.

Under the heading "Consultation"², "Moving on to an English-language subsequent course" it then states:

One party wonders whether the requirement of in-depth Dutch also applies to the pupil who moves on to an English-language subsequent course in European Netherlands. The school certificate gives 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 is a general admission right which does not differentiate between Dutch and foreign-language further education. If the pupil wants to claim the right of admission, the requirement that the in-depth subject Dutch is taught applies, even if the subsequent course is offered in a language other than Dutch. This does not affect the fact that a school on Bonaire or in the European Netherlands can also admit pupils who do not meet this requirement.

The timing of the publication is of course unfortunate. All this should have been published years earlier. Why? At this moment (April 2021) students are preparing for their final exams and enrollment processes are underway (I know about these processes at some HBO institutions in the European Netherlands but I do not have an all-encompassing picture). With this letter - also addressed to them - I hope to ensure that these processes get a boost in the right direction. But the communication about this with these institutions should of course have been shaped by the Ministry of OCW. In spite of all my writing, this ministry does not respond at all. The last signal received from them concerns the letter of January 5, 2021, which I have already responded to on January 8, 2021.

In particular, the point that the cycle of things at CXC is not in phase with a similar cycle at the Ministry of OCW and that therefore this connection problem has a *structural* character and has nothing at all to do with - for example - the COVID19 pandemic, I do not see addressed at all as yet.

Note: *As a result of the pandemic, the timetable did change last year and this year and exams were shifted in time.*

In this context, I submitted a question to the CXC organization to which (today, April 21, 2021) the following response was received:

² In my previous letter (dated April 13, 2021), I mentioned that I am not convinced that all inconsistency and imperfections have now been fixed (referring to "Consultation" of the Explanatory Memorandum). This is something I am still working on.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the region, the May-June examinations are now beginning in June. As a result, results will be issued to the Ministries of Education during the last week of September and online to candidates shortly thereafter.

For university/college applications, it is possible to make an Early Results Release request. This allows results to be sent quickly to universities/colleges, within a few days after the release of the official examination results to the Ministries of Education at the end of September. Further details on this process will be posted on our website and social media pages once examinations have started.

It is of course much more logical that the Ministry of OCW comes up with this kind of message in a timely manner than that I - a resident of St. Eustatius involved in education - have to look for solutions myself.

I may hope for an improved communication between the Ministry of OCW, the educational institutions involved on both your and my side of the Atlantic and the students who like to manifest themselves as prospective students in the European Netherlands. To date, all I see is an ivory tower feeling unapproachable at about seven thousand kilometers distance.

Of course it is only a small number of students who are involved, but - and this sometimes seems to be lost sight of - this does concern a part of the Netherlands; the Caribbean Netherlands to be precise. And of course this is not only a matter for the Kingdom Relations Committee, the domain of Education, Culture and Science must also realize that people live here.

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 KR Committee*
National Ombudsman
Enrolment agencies at a number of HBO institutes in the European Netherlands