

St. Eustatius, April 28, 2022.

Dear Chairman and Members of the Education, Culture and Science Commission,

Through the intervention of your Commission I would like to bring to the attention of the Minister of OCW that yesterday (April 27, 2022) by CXC (Caribbean Examinations Council; see the announcement on the website cxc.org) the notification was made that the exams have been moved up 3 weeks (so instead of starting on May 3, 2022, they now start three weeks later).

In my opinion, this is an inexistent phenomenon in the European Netherlands. Educationland and students would - I estimate - be on their hind legs. In this part of the same Netherlands (the Caribbean Netherlands) this just happens.

Nobody will turn back the fact as such, I can understand that. And I also see that it is difficult for a club like CXC to have to maneuver between the various English-speaking, Caribbean islands, each with its own autonomous government (including a Ministry of Education). Just see if you can get a consensus on that. Anyway, once there is an examination program, in my opinion it cannot be that with less than a week to go the examination program is suddenly pushed back three weeks.

The exam results, according to the announcement, are not expected until the end of August or early September 2022. How to deal with students who have decided to continue their studies in - for example - the European Netherlands at a training institute that opens its doors for the new school year around the time that the exam results become known, is uncertain. Quite a financial risk for parents who pay for ferry tickets in a region that is not known for its rich inhabitants. Will there be a provision for this? Or did the Dutch administrators not consider this when they agreed to this decision? Or was the Dutch Ministry of OCW not even involved (or even invited) to this decision-making meeting?

Now I have not really been able to catch the Dutch government on a certain love for the Caribbean Netherlands but this is yet another example showing that the European Netherlands figuratively leaves its Caribbean fellow countrymen out in the cold. Is the realization dawning on us that the representatives of the people should also include the Caribbean Netherlands in their domain?

I would like to hope that students from the Dutch Caribbean who are going to study in the European Netherlands (or elsewhere) and are taking a (financial) risk because they are going to make a crossing while they do not know whether they will be admitted, will not again be left out in the cold. I hope that the Ministry of OCW still feels the responsibility to also assist the Caribbean Dutch students.

In this context, another question: has the diploma register now been made Caribbean-ready? Or is it still impossible to register the diplomas of the Dutch Caribbean in this register. Even the originally Dutch diplomas of havo and vmbo origin of some years ago were not in it. However, I do not exclude the possibility that no progress has even been made in this matter after I asked questions about it some time ago. I may hope that someone will reply to me and prove me wrong....

Yours sincerely,

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cc: *Chairman and members of the Kingdom Relations Committee, National Ombudsman*