

The Hague, December 3, 2022

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee on Kingdom Relations of the TK and EK,

I would like to believe and see that the Caribbean Netherlands is truly a part of the Netherlands, with all inhabitants with the same facilities, rights and obligations. In my opinion, and feel free to call me naive, that was also the intention for the three BES islands in 2010. That Dutch laws and regulations - I named it that way earlier - were not immediately applied there (with exceptions appropriate to the status of public entity) I see as a flaw, but more and more I am of the opinion that it was not so much a mistake as a preconceived (though well hidden) plan.

Asylum seekers and immigrants are held to Dutch laws and regulations, but in the incorporation of Dutch citizens into our country, we look first at the nature of Dutch citizenship: European Dutch citizens along yardstick A and Caribbean Dutch citizens along yardstick B. Whether it concerns the granting of the BSN, social benefits, the submission to the tax regime, the provision of public transport, the way in which care is organized, the availability of Dutch banks, the fight against poverty and undoubtedly many other aspects: it is all slightly different (read: mainly less) in the Caribbean Netherlands than in the European Netherlands.

And every time the item is on the agenda to be discussed there is a detour that invariably begins with the need for further research and ends with the conclusion that the situation is simply different (in the Caribbean Netherlands compared to the European Netherlands) without asking whether that is the way it is by nature (for example, with regard to the climate) or whether it is simply created that way by people and their human decisions (as in the case of the BSN and the organization of municipal administrations). In any case, the basic attitude of the government over and over again is: deny, look away and above all do nothing about it (at best perhaps in a few years). I have called this attitude institutional discrimination before and, as such, I have now submitted it to the National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism.

For the record, I note that I also believe that the islanders and the Island Councils can do more to bring about their (better) position in the Netherlands.

Recently I have heard in corridors that there is some incentive for the development of ecotourism in the Caribbean Netherlands. About 10 million euros per year would be available for this for each island. (I did not succeed in verifying this point; perhaps that is where the effort was made). That - limiting myself to St. Eustatius - the official tourism office on the island is then left out of this development and

that this mainly concerns a pot of money that only the government commissioner and a small club of faithful know about, seems to me to be something that in any municipality in the Netherlands is an unimaginable thing.

For example, I understand from the newspaper that the impending apology for the slavery past (again acting unilaterally: no consultation with local entities) involves a sum of 200 million euros. I'm sure it will be put to good use but for equalizing - for example - the social benefits (as if the Caribbean Dutchman were a full-fledged Dutchman) for a fraction of this seems like no room.

And if I could just understand the rationale for all this underhandedness, then maybe I could explain it to others. But that too is not the case. What holds me up in my conviction is that I read in the book "Ongemak" (ISBN 978 90 446 4926 0) that even institutions such as the National Ombudsman, the Council of State and the Human Rights Board are critical of this cabinet's conduct. Even the evaluation commission led by Mrs. Spies in 2015 found that the Dutch government should listen much better to the local population, do much more to fight poverty and be less dominant (see page 239 of book cited). In my experience, this finding from seven years ago is as valid as ever, and completely diametrically different actions are still being taken.

My call for reflection, wisdom and common sense (the call for compassion may be a touch too much) remains in force.

Sincerely,

J.H.T. (Jan) Meijer MSc MBA,

Cornelis Houtmanstraat 9-b,

2593 RD The Hague.

T +31 6 31 79 58 57 (for whatsapp)

E jhtm.nl@gmail.com

W <http://statia.nu> or <http://statia.nu/nl>

cc: *National Ombudsman, National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism*