



**ST. EUSTATIUS  
CARIBISCH NEDERLAND**

**The Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of the Netherlands  
Attn.: The Prime Minister, Hon. Mark Rutte  
Binnenhof 19 | 2513 AA | The Hague  
P.O. box 20001 | 2500 EA | The Hague  
The Netherlands**

Sint Eustatius, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Subject:** request for urgent response to Executive Council's letter of January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Excellency!

In reference to my letter to you of April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017, I am hereby urgently requesting your attention for the following.

I have taken note of the decision list of a procedural meeting of the Permanent Committee for Kingdom Relations (PCKR) of the Dutch Parliament, which took place on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017. According to said decision list, the penultimate agenda point, number 14, was an open floor question from MP van Raak about the status of your response to the Executive Council of Sint Eustatius' letter to you of January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Contrary to what was stated in the query of the PCKR of January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017, and the mentioned decision list of April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the Executive Council never referred to nor requested independence for Sint Eustatius, and is seeking an autonomous status within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The decision regarding said agenda point 14, states that you will be requested to provide the Dutch Parliament with a response to the PCKR's letter no later than June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017 so that said response can be taken into consideration during the meetings with the Island Councils on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

I consider it very unfortunate that the Dutch Parliament has adopted a cavalier attitude towards a matter of such great significance, and allows the letter of January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 which was sent on behalf of the citizens of Sint Eustatius who are supposed to be legally represented by that same Parliament, to go unanswered for almost six (6) months.

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Being a historian by profession, you can surely appreciate the fact that the rights to self-determination and full internal self-government are at the foundation of the international legal order as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations, to which the Government of the Netherlands was one of the first signatories.

It is also a known fact that the Government of the Netherlands prides itself on upholding said international legal order, as it repeatedly and strongly pointed out during its campaign to be elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2016.

What I find even more unfortunate and striking about the apparent lack of urgency of the Dutch Parliament in dealing with the letter of January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017, is the fact that that same Parliament is always very quick to selectively respond to- and deal with local Statian matters (e.g. the recent issue with waste being washed into the sea due to inclement weather) when it is convenient to its members and the parties' political agendas.

In contrast, many complaints from the Government of Sint Eustatius regarding, among other things, the functioning of the acting Governor, the Kingdom Representative, and the ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations have been sent in copy to the Parliament over the past two years, without so much as an acknowledgement of receipt being sent back.

Excellency, I sincerely hope and trust that a response to the letter of January 4<sup>th</sup> is not deliberately being delayed by the Government of the Netherlands. I also trust and hope that the Government of the Netherlands will not repeat the mistake it made with the decolonization of Indonesia in the previous century, when it only heeded the calls of the international community after a bloody war and the threat of the United States to suspend the Marshall funds designated for rebuilding the Netherlands after World War II.

I believe that we have a historic opportunity and responsibility towards the citizens of the Dutch Kingdom to jointly and properly finalize the decolonization process for the Dutch overseas territories once and for all in an expeditious manner during the current third decade of decolonization as suggested and supported by MP's van Raak and Bosman in the Dutch Parliament in December of 2016.

Replying to the letter of January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and commencing a constructive dialogue with the Government of Sint Eustatius as soon as possible, based on the documents it has prepared thus far, will set us on the path to that achievement, and I therefore look forward to your reply at your earliest convenience.

Trusting to have informed you sufficiently, I remain,

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Sincerely,



Clyde I. van Putten

Island Council Member and Government Coalition Leader of Sint Eustatius