



INFORMATION BULLETIN

BONAIRE, ST. EUSTATIUS EN SABA

10.10.10 is approaching. The Netherlands Antilles will be dissolved as a country on 10 October 2010. Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba will become public bodies of the Netherlands. What are the consequences of these changes for the three islands? This information bulletin provides an explanation of the political changes and provides answers to frequently asked questions.

BIJLEVELD: THE PATH IS CLEAR FOR 10.10.10



Only recently, a number of ministers resigned in the Netherlands. Other government members remained to see to the management of the affairs of the outgoing cabinet. Ank Bijleveld-Schouten, State Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, has remained in office also in order to be able to ensure that the changes on the Netherlands Antilles can still be carried out according to plan.

Pleased

Bijleveld: "I am pleased that the Dutch House of Representatives was still willing to pass the laws that were necessary in order to be able to have everything ready on time. I was a bit worried. It would have been very disappointing if it all would have had to take a lot longer. Now that the Dutch House of Representatives has

approved the necessary laws means that as far as that is concerned nothing can go wrong any longer in the process of making Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba really part of the Netherlands. Now, the Senate still has to approve the laws, but I am hopeful that this will be accomplished as well." It is the intention that all changes will take effect on 10 October 2010 or 10.10.10 as it is referred to. Ank Bijleveld is also optimistic about this. "For a year already, there are people – we call them quartermasters – are working on making sure that everything is ready so that the three islands can continue as part of the Netherlands when the time comes. A lot still has to be done, but the path is now clear to have everything ready on time."

Own identity

10.10.10 should be a special day on all of the islands: "The interesting thing about the islands is that they are so different; they each have their own identity. This should stay like that, the new relationship with the Netherlands will not change this. What we do wish to change is that the people get a better future. Prosperity, well-being and happiness are very tangible. That is for instance work, a home and an education for your children. And this will happen; you can be sure of that."

CENTRE FOR YOUTH AND FAMILY SABA OPENS 23 APRIL: MEET THE PROFESSIONALS

Saba's Commissioner of Youth & Family, Chris Johnson: "The process of political change is not always easy and sometimes we also ask ourselves what the advantages are. But behind the scenes, a lot of work is being done every day to improve the quality of life on the islands. This new Centre for Youth and Family is a perfect example of what we can expect when we become a public body of the

Netherlands. One of the most important tasks of the new Centre is coordinating the activities of the many youth organisations on the island. Parents and children can turn to the Centre for help and advice. I certainly hope that all residents of Saba will take advantage of this new opportunity and make use of the Centre for Youth and Family!"



Front row from left to right: Jacques de Vries - Social Worker, Saskia Cox - Social Psychiatric Nurse, Annemieke Tromp - Educational Assistant, Cheryl Ferero - Child and Adult Psychiatrist & Project Leader Youth Healthcare

Back row from left to right: Chris Johnson - Commissioner of Youth & Family, Dr. Elsa van Putten - Project Doctor Youth Healthcare, Michel Deurloo - Office Manager RSC Saba, Joyce Smith - nurse Baby Clinic, Dr. Joka Blaauboer - Family Physician



HOOKER: SCHOOL MATERIALS ST. EUSTATIUS CONCRETE RESULT OF COOPERATION

Commissioner of Education on St. Eustatius, Roy Hooker: "In anticipation of the new status of the islands on 10.10.10, the Netherlands has agreed with Saba and St Eustatius that it will already assume the responsibility for a number of matters including education. For years, schools have had

to cope with insufficient funding and as a result it was difficult to satisfy the basic educational requirements. With handing out of school materials to students, the first concrete result has been achieved in this area. Making these school materials available forms the basis for an improvement of the

SABA RECEIVES FIVE NEW SCHOOL BUSES

On Saba, people were pleased with the five new school buses that were made available by the Netherlands. Supplying the buses is part of the Education Improvement Program for Saba. The keys to the buses were handed over to Chris Johnson, Commissioner of Education "I am very happy to be able to show the

buses to the children today. In order to enjoy a good education, it is very important that the children arrive at school on time."



now received educational materials and the teachers are receiving special training courses in the methods. In addition, it is important that the children dedicate themselves to their studies and read more. Parents can also help with this, so that the children obtain a higher educational level."

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will the Regional Service Centre take over the role of the government of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba?

After the Netherlands Antilles ceases to exist, the own local government will remain the most important government for the residents of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. They remain your Island Council, your Executive Council, your Lieutenant Governor and your island civil servants and they will continue to do what they do now. For example, they will issue passports, solemnize marriages, organise elections, determine where it is permitted to build, grant permits for a festival or parade, determine the level of local taxes, decide on subsidies, maintain the roads and they will be responsible for the public order. This is how it is now and this is how it will remain.

Will each resident of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba have the opportunity to obtain a good education? Or is this only possible for the Dutch citizens and the more affluent Antilleans?

Each child – whether of Antillean or Dutch origin – is entitled to develop his or her talents and to attend school in order to lay a good foundation for his or her future. The measures that are now being taken together with the Executive Councils to improve the quality of the education on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba are therefore almost completely directed at the regular school system. For instance, free school books, new teaching methods, teacher training programs and the improvement of school buildings.



When will something be done about the poor state of the roads on Bonaire and St. Eustatius?

Bonaire and St. Eustatius are now, and will remain responsible themselves for the maintenance of the roads and the correct use of the roads fund after the discontinuation of the Netherlands Antilles. The Dutch Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management can provide support in the form of expert advice.

Will the flags and national anthems of the Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba be replaced by the Dutch flag and the Dutch national anthem after 10.10.10?

No. Unfortunately, many untrue stories are told about the Netherlands. The Netherlands is not coming to Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba to lower the flags or replace the national anthems. Also not to have fishermen pay for catching fish from the sea. It is not true that the Netherlands intends to use the salt in Bonaire to spread on the snowy Dutch roads. It is also not true that the Netherlands will bring in hundreds of Dutch civil servants. The Netherlands has temporarily sent civil servants to set up the Dutch government organisations on the islands and the civil servants of the Netherlands Antilles, who already live and work on the islands, will become the permanent employment of the Netherlands.

The government employers on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba have paid too little pension premiums into the APNA for a number of years. Will this have an effect on the pension entitlements of the individual civil servants?

No. The fact that government employers have not paid the pension premiums into the APNA does not have any consequences for the pension entitlements of the individual civil servants. In addition, the Netherlands is prepared, under certain conditions, to pay the debts when the islands become part of the Netherlands as public bodies.

Why are new detention centres being built on Bonaire and St. Eustatius? Will prisoners from other islands be transferred to Bonaire and St. Eustatius?

No, prisoners from the Netherlands Antilles will not be transferred to the new detention centres on Bonaire and St. Eustatius. The existing prison on Bonaire - in the centre of Kralendijk - has been renovated and will be expanded temporarily. In the meantime, the construction of a complete new detention centre for Bonaire with a capacity of 95 detention places is being prepared. The plan is to take this new complex on the former plantation Aruba into use in three or five years time. A new detention centre is also being built on St. Eustatius, in this case with 30 detention places. Both centres – which will generate a large number of jobs – will be used for the prisoners who come from Bonaire and St. Eustatius and Saba respectively. In this manner, they can serve their sentence close to home.

I cannot pay my tax bill? What should I do?

If the payment of a tax assessment is a problem or if you believe that the tax assessment is not correct, visit the tax information centre on your island and discuss the problem.

Will everyone be insured against healthcare costs, irrespective of age, nationality or state of health?

Yes. Everyone who is a legal and permanent resident of one of the three islands is compulsorily insured against healthcare costs as from 1 January 2011, with the exception of a few possible exceptions in the event of internships, au-pairs and expats. No distinction is made as to age, state of health or nationality.

Is it correct that when the Netherlands replaces the Netherlands Antilles in the future you will be able to buy drugs everywhere?

No. Drugs are not tolerated on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba.

Why have amendments been adopted by the Dutch House of Representatives regarding gay marriage, euthanasia and abortion on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba? This does not fit the culture of our islands.

The Dutch House of Representatives had decided by majority to reduce the proposed transition term of five years to one or two years. Secretary of State Bijleveld is aware that the amendments that contain rules regarding gay marriage, abortion and euthanasia are sensitive issues on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. The implementation of the new laws will therefore take place with great care, taking into account the sentiments of the population and in cooperation with the island governments.

Will my health insurance package remain the same?

That depends on your present health insurance package. Many people will be insured better in the future than they are at present. The point is that everyone receives the same insurance and that nobody will have an insurance package that is inferior to their present insurance package.

Misunderstanding of the month

The Netherlands has a financial interest in Bonaire; otherwise, you would not bother with us. You want our oil. We will not receive any of these revenues later.

There is no oil production around Bonaire. That is nonsense. On the contrary, the Netherlands wishes to invest in conserving the beautiful Bonaire coral and thus also in maintaining diving tourism. The Netherlands does not want to earn money off Bonaire, but it is willing to invest in public health, the environment, education, youth care, safety, debt restructuring, the landing strip of the airport and many other matters.

Questions or comments?

If you have a question or comment about the Regional Service Centre or about the constitutional process, then you can contact us. We are pleased to be of assistance!

Regionaal Service Centrum Bonaire
Kaya International z/n
Kralendijk, Bonaire, Nederlandse Antillen
Telefoon +599 717 8333

Regionaal Service Centrum Sint Eustatius
Mazinga Complex A, B
Fort Oranjestraat
Oranjestad, Sint Eustatius, Nederlandse Antillen
Telefoon +599 318 3370

Regionaal Service Centrum Saba
The Bottom, Saba, Nederlandse Antillen
Telefoon +599 416 3934

info-rsc@rsc-bes.nl
www.rsc-bes.nl