

Dear Chairman and members of the Commission on Kingdom Relations,

I would like to inform you about the most recent developments on St. Eustatius. In principle, it seems to me, the island is fairly easy to fence off. Whether it is desirable is another question, but technically it is not that difficult. After all, one seaport and one airport and for the rest a lot of sea around the small island.

When every incoming guest goes into quarantine for two weeks, before being released on the island, it seems to me that all this is relatively easy to keep under control. Isolate each anomaly (i.c. a positively tested covid19 case), and - so says my common sense - "done". It only gets complicated when somebody sits between them and can and may say: "this is an 'essential worker' and he or she doesn't need quarantine". Of course, such a position is surrounded by so-called 'protocols', but the opening for the virus is thus given.

By systematically not communicating with the local population (but claiming to be in high esteem upon arrival in February 2020) you do not really build up a relationship of trust, so if the government commissioner communicates (read: sends, for example via radio) then there is a healthy dose of suspicion on the part of the listener. The listener mainly tries to listen to those things that have not been said and builds his or her own story around them. Well, that's how it goes if you are kept stupid long enough ¹.

And if you take an 'essential worker' from the outside (while the 'essential instruction' to be given by this official could have been given relatively effortlessly on paper or via a video connection), which turns out to be infected and you let yourself be photographed standing close together and without protection otherwise (mouthguard) for a publication on Facebook, then in my opinion you're not really smart. In the European Netherlands a minister has to answer seriously in the House of Representatives for what I think is a more innocent phenomenon, here everyone just seems to get away with something that is not even considered 'wrong'. And just now it has been reported on the radio that on St. Eustatius the three cases from yesterday, have doubled to six cases at the moment.

When I say 'everyone' (in the previous paragraph), I refer in any case to the government commissioner, the director of the hospital and some doctors who have been photographed in this way with the 'essential worker' in question. They are all role models who know how it should be done and then do not follow it up at all. No doctor goes into quarantine and even the crisis manager considers himself above the law and issues all sorts of instructions, except that protocols must be followed by his

¹ I have told you before that at a previous employer this phenomenon was known as the "mushroom routine" or "keep them in the dark and feed them with shit".

own 'inner circle'. In other words, essential workers who have to wear a mouth shield on construction projects, the essential workers in or near the hospital are just messing about ².

Well, let's hope nobody has seen it and nobody talks about it. It seems to me that executive officers mentioned in this way have made themselves ridiculous and - as far as I am concerned - completely unbelievable.

I conclude my disappointed speech with a request. Please let it lead there that the borders of the island are carefully guarded for the health of the incoming people (in relation to the covid19 pandemic) and unconditionally maintain the fourteen-day quarantine (so no exceptions; in other words: delete the term 'essential worker'). If public health is really considered more important than the economy, then it seems unnecessary to me to make this wish explicit, as self-evident as it sounds.

For the record, read my request mainly as a concern on my part. I am extremely worried that if the situation here indeed escalates, the management of the island and of the hospital (and of the care chain as a whole) will go into a cramp and if the proverbial cat starts to make weird jumps. Attention could then be shifted to "not getting the blame" instead of really adequate and transparent crisis management. On a personal note I would like to add: please prepare HMS Karel Doorman for another mission in the Caribbean.

As always, I wish you much wisdom.

Kind regards,

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cc: Chairman and members of the VWS Committee

² I hardly dare to ask the question, but is there such a thing as an added value of the hospitainer? The first messages (before it was delivered and installed) indicated intensive care places, later this was weakened, and at the moment there seems to be only a shell of linked containers, with a parking place of course, but with no other function than to store things.