

The Hague, March 4, 2024.

Dear members of the Island Council and Commissioners of St. Eustatius,

At the end of January I offered help (see https://www.jhtm.nl/statia/bibliotheek/20240123_wolbes_finbes_EN.pdf) in your "fight" with the NL government. I have not heard anything more.

The offer still stands. My view is rather simple and straightforward. It boils down to the following: as a special municipality of the Netherlands, NL law applies unless circumstances make that specific Statia law applies or should apply. It is then up to Statia (you!) to make it clear how it should be different and why.

In my opinion - for example - with regard to social legislation (such as the social minimum) there is no reason to deviate for the Caribbean Netherlands from what is regulated for the (European) Netherlands. It is the local, Statian employers who are not waiting for equalization (increase) of the minimum wage. If these employers would be disproportionately burdened then the solution to this should be fiscal or temporary measures but not the withholding of provisions from the Statian population.

It is a logical consequence of the "comply or explain" policy (in other words: follow the Dutch laws and regulations, unless there is a good reason to take your own Statian course).

I will gladly be your representative in the European Netherlands. If you appoint me to do so (and make that known to the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. As far as I am concerned there are no costs involved (I do not have to earn anything from it), unless I have to incur costs (expenses or travel expenses for example): I would like to be able to declare them.

I would like to hear from you.

Kind regards,

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P.S. Now that you are in the European Netherlands, maybe we can meet. You are welcome in our apartment: Turfhaven 561, 2511 DK The Hague (in the center, walking distance from your hotels).