

020/21 ER

Connectivity Winair

Motion

The Island Council of the Public Entity St. Eustatius in its public meeting of today, Thursday February 4th 2021

Considering that,

- Both for local traffic and tourism St. Eustatius is, due to its remote location as an island, largely dependent on airlift.
- For air connections to and from St. Eustatius, the main hub is PJIA Airport in St. Maarten.
- Windward Island Airways has a monopoly on the Route St. Maarten – St. Eustatius – St. Maarten.
- As a result of this monopolistic position of Winair, the lack of structured competition and the high taxes and fees charged by St. Maarten and PJIA on airline tickets, Winair's ticket prices are exorbitant high and per mile flown the highest in the world.
- The high cost of airline tickets St. Maarten – St. Eustatius – St. Maarten is a deterring factor for our island's economic development especially where it comes to developing tourism.
- The high cost of airline tickets St. Maarten – St. Eustatius – St. Maarten is contributing to the high cost of living.
- Presently there is a temporary connection St. Eustatius – Bonaire. This route is flown by Winair subsidized by the national government with seat guarantees.
- Winair is not advertising this route, yet opened and advertised their route St. Maarten – Curacao with very low fares (USD 249), which can be seen as competition of the route St. Eustatius – Bonaire. A similar practice had led to the failure of a trial with Dutch Caribbean Express
- There is a need for a structural air-connection St. Eustatius – Bonaire – St. Eustatius for the following reasons:
 - o To connect the islands of Caribbean Netherlands, without having to fly through one or more other countries;
 - o Direct flights to Bonaire save a lot of travel time, also onward to Curacao, Aruba etc.;
 - o Direct flights to Bonaire also allow for less expensive connections to the European part of the Netherlands as well as the rest of Europe;
 - o This alternative hub will also be of additional value to the development of tourism on St. Eustatius;
 - o Treatment by medical specialists available at hospital Mariadal in Bonaire will come within reach of ZVK patients from St. Eustatius.
 - o A regular direct flights St. Eustatius – Bonaire – St. Eustatius will offer the possibility of notary services for St. Eustatius by notaries established in Bonaire. This might be the solution for the ongoing difficulties we are facing with the dependence on notary services in St. Maarten.
- Lower air fares in general and the alternative route through Bonaire will increase the success of the new hotel development, which will be ready for business within short.

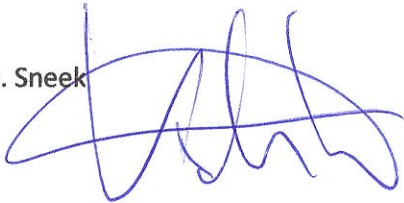
Resolves

To request the executive council/government commissioner to start discussions with the national government:

1. To assist with the introduction of structural scheduled and affordable flights St. Eustatius – Bonaire.
2. To demand from Winair that the company under the present seat guarantee arrangement will do their utmost to advertise the route St. Eustatius – Bonaire, offer fares competitive to those on their route St. Maarten – Curacao and include the St. Eustatius – Bonaire route into international booking systems and code-sharing agreements with KLM and other airlines they work with.
3. To carry out the recommendations in the report by the group Peter Hartman (former KLM CEO) from 2018 and introduce a system of public transportation whereby a subsidy on air travel to/from Statia will make ticket prices more affordable for local travel and tourism alike.

And goes over to the order of the day

N. Sneek



The motion is accepted/rejected in the meeting of

Cc.: Island Council Saba
Island Council Bonaire
Commissie KR 2de Kamer

*Reckelline Heerdam.
Heerdam..*

*Deze motie is aangenomen met vier stemmen vóór: onafhankelijk: Dhr Sneek;
PLP: Dhr Merckman en Mw. Heerdam en DP: Mw. Spanner.
Eilandsraadvergadering d.d. 4 februari 2021*