



**ST. EUSTATIUS
CARIBISCH NEDERLAND**

Island Council Members
Ms. R. Leerdam
Ms. F. Spanner
Mr. R. Merkman
Mr. N. Sneek
Mr. C. van Putten

Our number: 1023/GEZ.

Oranjestad, September 16th, 2021

Dear members of the Island Council,

Herewith I inform you that the motion submitted on January 13th, 2021, register number: 504/21, re: Dutch Housing Cooperative (Woonlinie, currently Bazalt Wonen) and St. Eustatius Housing Foundation (SHF), will not be executed as substantiated hereafter.

The sale of social housing to private individuals (withdrawal of housing from the social supply) is at odds with federal and island policy to increase the range of social rental housing. Its purpose is to provide more low-income residents of St. Eustatius with affordable rental housing, in order to achieve a better balance between the cost of living and income (poverty reduction in the context of the subsistence minimum benchmark). The motion calls for the sale to current tenants and thus to increase home ownership. This appeal defies general public housing objectives and exposes a problem of skewed rents: When tenants have sufficient income to be able to buy a home, they do not belong in social housing, but should be encouraged to either start renting in the private sector or proceed to purchase.

As long as there is a waiting list at SHF and the benchmark subsistence minimum in terms of housing costs has not yet been reached, there is no reasonable policy substantiation for the sale of social housing to current tenants by the Public Entity.



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Furthermore

The motion will nullify future agreements between The Public Entity of St. Eustatius, The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, St. Eustatius Housing Foundation and Bazalt Wonen, in the so called Agreement System. These agreements are aimed at the ultimate renovation of 94 and construction of 48 social rental homes after carrying out two pilots according to a realistic timeline, without political interference, and with the involvement of local contractors. A substantial investment by Bazalt Wonen, which will increase the supply of social rental housing. This will allow more people to exercise their right to occupy social housing. There is no reasonable policy basis for this either, as long as there is a waiting list at SHF (and therefore a need to increase the supply of social rental housing) and there is no realistic and reliable alternative for renovation and construction of social rental housing.

Moreover

The Island Council lacks the right to budget. A motion on the sale of dwellings is therefore irrelevant.

Yours respectfully,




Ms. M.A.U. Francis
Government Commissioner