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Koninkrijksrelaties

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**Introduction**

In this memorandum, I am informing your House on the progress of the projects under way on St Eustatius and on the progress made under the Act on the Restoration of the Provisions for St Eustatius. You received the previous progress report on 14 December 2020, shortly after the Island Council elections held in October 2020<sup>1</sup>.

My recent visit to St Eustatius, on 16 and 17 May 2021, enabled me to ascertain that once more, many results have been achieved and meaningful steps have been taken towards improving the living conditions of the Statians. Thus, a foundation for the future is gradually being established. And this is imperative, because when the time comes, before long, that the Act on the Restoration of the Provisions will be phased out, the island must be up to par and the civil service must be ready to function in the restored democracy. The Island Council intends to speed up the efforts to fully restore democracy. However, the current restoration is still fragile, and a sustainable basis is needed. It is no easy task to convert the years of administrative and infrastructural neglect of St Eustatius into a situation that allows future local administrators to adequately perform their duties, and in which major deprivations have been remedied. Speed is, therefore, not the goal. The goal is a St Eustatius to which everyone contributes and from which everyone will ultimately benefit.

In addition to a general picture, I am outlining the progress of projects at the administrative, social, and physical levels. In conclusion, I will list the topics that are proceeding smoothly and the topics that still require additional attention.

This report encompasses **five** appendices:

- Appendix 1 reviews the intervention on St Eustatius.
- Appendix 2 features more comprehensive information on the projects involving the social domain. As I set great store by an improvement of the

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<sup>1</sup> Dutch House of Representatives, 2020–2021, 35 570 IV, no. 25

socio-economic conditions for the population, this Appendix focuses additional attention on the social domain and on the results that have been achieved since November 2020.

- Appendix 3 contains an analysis of the communications from the Public Body of St Eustatius (OLE) and from the members of the Island Council to the population, in preparation for the elections of 21 October 2020. I have committed to such an analysis in the debate with the Dutch Senate, held on 6 April last.
- Appendix 4 provides an overview of the phase model ensuing from the Act on the Restoration of the Provisions for St Eustatius and the associated powers and restrictions of the members of the Island Council and of the Government Commissioner.
- Appendix 5 lists the facts and figures pertaining to the projects that have been funded from a non-specific allowance.

### **General picture**

I visited St Eustatius on 16 and 17 May last. I there observed a range of results and experienced what a small island spanning 21 square kilometres can be great at.

In line with the promises of the Dutch government, a reliable and safe network of roads is unfolding slowly but surely. Some 4.1 kilometres of roads have been constructed, representing a total investment of EUR 7.2 million. And the island's first roundabout has been completed.

At the time, the government also promised cheaper and faster Internet connections; a better and more reliable water supply grid<sup>2</sup>; and measures to combat erosion at the Fort Oranje cliff. Since then, all this has been realised.

All in all, it is my impression that St Eustatius is making great strides in many respects. The fact remains, however, that there is room for further development. Moreover, COVID-19 has also created additional difficulties for St Eustatius, especially in terms of the speed with which projects could be addressed. The pandemic has deprived residents of their freedom of movement. The borders are closed to non-essential visits. The island is pursuing a strict entry and quarantine policy.

The healthcare sector is under pressure, but the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has flown in additional healthcare staff to assist the island with the provision of regular healthcare and with the preparations for and implementation of the vaccination programme. Furthermore, a hospitainer<sup>3</sup> has been provided.

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix 6 presents the results achieved with respect to, inter alia, the Internet and the water supply.

<sup>3</sup> A hospitainer is a well-equipped cargo container serving as a mobile doctor's surgery. Currently, the hospitainer is being used for vaccinations.

Since 22 February, the community health service has been focusing on immunising the population (all the over-18s) with the Moderna vaccine. However, the majority of the population is suspicious of the vaccine, despite the information provided by the community health service. As a result, the 46 per cent vaccination coverage<sup>4</sup> is lagging behind. Apparently, many residents fail to acknowledge the need for immunisation, as they can continue their everyday routines and do not need to leave the island.

Over the past few months, the Netherlands has been providing the island with economic relief. On account of the corona virus pandemic, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has been providing financial support to both Stavian businesses and the Public Body of St Eustatius itself. Through 2020 and the first quarter of 2021, a sum of approx. EUR 780,000 has been paid out to businesses by way of overhead compensation (TVL scheme). Furthermore, through 2020 and the first quarter of 2021, Stavian companies have received grants totalling some EUR 2.8 million to cover labour costs (NOW scheme). Data on the grants paid out over the second quarter of 2021 is not yet available, as this progress report was drawn up before the end of this period. The grants have been paid out to 150 businesses and to 350 employees. The largest three sectors provided with financial aid are: the hospitality business; the culture, sports, and leisure activities sector; and rentals and other commercial services. In 2020, the Public Body of St Eustatius received EUR 2,324,840 by way of compensation for loss of tax revenues. In addition, it received the first three rounds of support from the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment<sup>5</sup>. An additional sum of EUR 1,946,920 has been awarded for the first and second quarters of 2021. All this financial aid was essential to support the island residents and the Public Body at a time of closed borders.

I am currently reviewing, together with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, how we can safely open up the island, in spite of its low vaccination coverage, in order to phase out the relief packages.

The entire Caribbean Netherlands is faced with major socio-economic challenges. In order to genuinely improve the standard of living, I set down a social minimum benchmark in 2019, in collaboration with the State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport. In addition, the State Secretary raised the benefits, pensions, and child allowances. The actual figures are listed in the paragraph headed "Social domain".

### **Administrative domain**

In the sixth progress report, I informed you about the next step in the restoration of democracy: the Island Council elections of 21 October 2020. As a result of the elections, the Island Council has resumed its activities, albeit with limited powers. These powers have been set down in the Act on the Restoration of the Provisions.

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<sup>4</sup> Status as of 25 May 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Also referred to as resources for additional island policy, similar to the TONK scheme for Dutch municipalities in Europe.

The current Act provides for the step by step restoration of democracy, in accordance with established criteria and phases.

The members of the Island Council command a limited number of (non-financial) powers, one of which is the tabling of motions<sup>6</sup>. Over recent months, the Members have exerted this power four times. The motions pertained to social housing, a kidney dialysis centre, improvement of the banking system, and the connectivity of the island. In addition, a request has been submitted for additional parliamentary party support.

Across the board, collaboration between the members of the Island Council and the Government Commissioner has passed off in a constructive manner. Of late, however, several members of the Island Council have tended to conduct the dialogue through the media rather than directly with the Government Commissioner.

The restored Registry has been providing support. The Island Council has appointed a Registrar<sup>7</sup>. A Deputy Registrar / Coach has been recruited, as has a Registry assistant. Following the decease of the Registrar in April, the post is now vacant.

Despite this headway, the Island Council feels that the return to democracy is not progressing sufficiently rapidly, as stated in its memorandum entitled "Proposal for a route-timetable for the return to democracy in St Eustatius". In the Memorandum, the Island Council is requesting to have three articles of the current Act (Act on the Restoration of the Provisions for St Eustatius) go into force ahead of schedule. The request pertains to the following articles:

- Article 13 (Restoration of provisions for members of the Island Executive);
- Article 14 (Restoration of provisions for Registry and civil organisation);
- Article 15 (Restoration of responsibilities for financial duties).

Furthermore, the Island Council is requesting members of the Island Executive to be appointed by virtue of Article 13 (phase 2.0), whilst concurrently preserving the responsibilities of the Government Commissioner set down in phase 1.0. Both proposals are at odds with the current Act on the Restoration of the Provisions, which has been passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate, finding overwhelming support.

I have notified the Island Council that the Act on the Restoration of the Provisions has my full support. It is not up to the Island Council to decide on an amendment of this Act.

In June 2020, the Dutch House of Representatives adopted a motion<sup>8</sup> requesting the Government Commissioner to draw up a route-timetable specifying milestones

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<sup>6</sup> Art. 17 of the Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba Public Bodies Act (WoBES)

<sup>7</sup> Art. 5, Paragraph 1, Act on the Restoration of the Provisions for St Eustatius.

<sup>8</sup> Özütok motion (Parliamentary Documents II 2019/20, 35422, no. 8).

for each criterion and each phase. The criteria presented in the explanatory memorandum to the Act must be linked to a transparent timeframe. This will generate a point on the horizon based on the objectives and criteria relating to the return to democracy.

In the aforementioned Memorandum, the Island Council also states that it does not agree with these realistic target dates and that the restoration of democracy is taking too long. In addition to this seventh Progress Report, I will separately forward you a copy of my letter to the Island Council. In this letter I indicate that the (acting) Government Commissioner and I are pursuing the same goal. We are both anxious to restore democracy as quickly as possible, yet in accordance with the Act that sets out the steps towards a sustainable restoration.

*Route-timetable for the Act on the Restoration of the Provisions for St Eustatius*  
The substantiation of the criteria in the route-timetable, with interim results and a schedule, is a task to be performed by the (acting) Government Commissioner in conjunction with the Island Council. With regard to phase 2.0, all the technical briefings have meanwhile been held and linked to target dates. Based on the current situation, we expect to be transiting from phase 1.0 to phase 2.0 on 31 December 2022. In his letter dated 21 May 2021, the acting Government Commissioner sent the Island Council an overview of the target dates, thus making a start with the substantiation of the route-timetable.

*Departure of the Government Commissioner*

Mr Van Rij has served as the Government Commissioner from 15 February 2020 until 18 April 2021. I thank Mr Van Rij for his efforts and the results achieved over this past period. Meanwhile, the post is vacant.

Until a successor has been appointed, Ms Francis, the acting Government Commissioner, will be taking over the post of Government Commissioner. Ms Dijkshoorn-Lopes, the Island Secretary, will be supporting her in her duties. She was appointed on 11 April 2021, following a long period of substitution. As head of the civil service, she is actively working on the further professionalisation of this service. This professionalisation encompasses the acquisition of policy development expertise and skills; working with established processes; and drawing up multi-year strategic plans.

*Good governance: IT project*

Obsolete facilities preclude the civil service from embarking on the required modernisation operation. For that reason, a first step has been taken towards updating the IT in collaboration with the Shared Service Organisation for the Caribbean Netherlands (SSO CN). Phase by phase, well-equipped workspots will be realised that are in keeping with the new Central Government Office that is to be constructed.

The first phase of the IT project involved the installation of power and grid cables. This work was originally scheduled to be performed in 2019 and 2020. The delay will be made up in June 2021.

The second phase will revolve around connection to the Microsoft Office 365 environment. Staff of the Public Body of St Eustatius will be trained to work with the new system. The courses form part of the civil servants training programme (criterion 2.1) set out in the Act on the Restoration of the Provisions for St Eustatius.

### **Social domain**

In the purview of setting down priorities in the youth domain, a structural cooperative has been set up (also referred to as *Samenwerkingsverband 13+*) between the Public Body of St Eustatius and a number of Dutch Ministries (the Interior and Kingdom Relations; Health, Welfare and Sport; Social Affairs and Employment; Education, Culture and Science; Justice and Security). This broad-based collaboration enables the issues to be addressed in an integrated manner and funds to be used efficiently.

I would like to highlight five projects on which the Public Body of St Eustatius and the Ministries have been working over recent months. More details on the other projects in the social domain – childcare, social services, youth participation, and youth welfare – are provided in Appendix 2.

#### *Emancipation Day*

Emancipation Day has been designated as an official holiday on St Eustatius, as a result of the collaboration between the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Public Body of St Eustatius. Emancipation Day is intended to safeguard the dialogue on slavery and emancipation and to (further) develop social cohesion and national pride. Preparations for the first official Emancipation Day on 1 July next are in full swing; responsibility for its substantiation is vested with the Central Dialogue body, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, and the Public Body of St Eustatius.

When it comes to the acknowledgement of the island's slavery past, the archaeological excavation of some 35 graves of enslaved people plays a part. During my recent visit, I went to see the site at which the St Eustatius Center for Archaeological Research (SECAR) is carrying out excavations. It is one of the largest slave burial grounds discovered in the area so far.

#### *Employment services and participation*

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment has allocated specific allowances to several labour market projects on St Eustatius.

"Everyone taking part" is a pilot project affording ten islanders facing major labour market disadvantages the opportunity to gain 18 months of work experience with regular employers. The employers receive a grant to help cover labour costs. The ten participants are assisted by a job coach.

“Golden opportunity” affords 18 islanders in various job categories the opportunity to acquire work experience and skills at the Golden Rock Resort<sup>9</sup>. The island’s largest employer, oil transshipment terminal Global Terminal Investments (GTI), is providing 30 young people with technical training. They are thus developing skills that GTI needs.

#### *Combating poverty and debt counselling*

In the purview of further developing policy to combat poverty and provide debt counselling, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport have provided a policy consultant who will be assisting the Public Body of St Eustatius until the end of 2021. Appendix 6 features more information on the measures aimed at combating poverty on the island.

#### *Social housing*

In the social housing field, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has joined forces with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. The Housing and Living project leader is developing a Public Housing Comprehensive Policy Plan. In addition, a housing evaluation system and a rent tribunal are being set up.

A housing requirements survey conducted in 2019 revealed that 28 families are living under worrisome conditions. Within the context of combating poverty, the Public Body of St Eustatius aims to realise affordable housing for low-income families.

Meanwhile, the second round of houses has been completed, including five sheltered accommodations in the Lodi district. These supported housing accommodations are intended for residents with a disability, affording them the opportunity to live on their own for a longer period of time. Furthermore, five additional emergency accommodations have been made available for “urgent” families.

The permanent cooperative comprising the Public Body of St Eustatius, the Social Housing Foundation (SHF), the *Bazalt Wonen* housing corporation, and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations supervises the observance of agreements regarding the renovation and the construction of social rental homes.

#### *Sport and exercise for children*

In the purview of improving public health, the Public Body of St Eustatius and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport have concluded the Caribbean Sport and Prevention Agreement 2019-2022. Under this Agreement, the Healthy Food programme will be continued this year in three primary schools, the secondary school, a day care centre, and three out-of-school care organisations.

The Wilhelmina Park has received chess tables and new outdoor sports and fitness equipment, a milestone that was celebrated with a festive opening ceremony. The

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<sup>9</sup> A comprehensive resort on St Eustatius, currently under construction.

car park near the sports complex has been levelled and the swimming pool has seen the required repairs. The foundations for the Cruyff Court covering have been laid. The roof will be completed by this autumn. By then, the roof lighting will enable outdoor sports and exercise.

Statia Sports Facility Foundation (SSFF), the organisation responsible for pursuing the island's sports policy and for managing the sports facilities, has implemented internal reforms. A new director and a policy consultant / project leader have been appointed, who are implementing the plans.

## **Physical domain**

### *Cliff*

The cliff that houses the historic Fort Oranje has been stabilised. The project has been funded from the Reconstruction Resources<sup>10</sup> made available following devastating hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. The Public Body of St Eustatius has applied for a Specific Allowance in order to complete the finishing touches: building a fence to keep people off the cliff and constructing a cascade in the purview of water drainage into the sea. The cost of these finishing touches is expected to total an additional USD 1.1 million. The application is currently being reviewed at the administrative level.

### *Anti-erosion*

Overdue maintenance, uncontrolled rainwater discharge, and free-ranging, grazing cattle have resulted in erosion. Erosion constitutes a serious problem for St Eustatius. Several projects to stem further erosion have been completed. Smoke Alley Road, the hairpin bend leading to the sea-port, has been resurfaced. Above ground and underground systems have been put in place to discharge or conversely, to collect rainwater. At the end of 2020, the road was reopened as scheduled. The finishing touches will be completed by this summer.

In early 2021, a programme was launched to monitor and map the currents, tidal movements, and wave action of the sea. The data is being used to draw up a comprehensive, erosion-proof design for the coast and the port.

### *Roaming Animals / Free-ranging cattle*

Free-ranging goats and cows are not only inconveniencing residents; they also constitute one of the main causes of the erosion. Boven National Park alone accommodates thousands of free-ranging goats.

The Roaming Animals project aims to curb free-ranging cattle and erosion. Fences are being put up (including the aforementioned fences on Fort Oranje cliff), free-ranging herds are being rounded up, and cattle roaming at inaccessible locations are shot. The project involves close collaboration with St Eustatius National Park

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<sup>10</sup> A total of EUR 10.4 million has been made available for the stabilisation of the cliff wall underneath Fort Oranje.



(STENAPA), which manages the National Park. All the measures need to be set down in a sustainable agriculture policy.

The first step in the intended approach of the Public Body of St Eustatius would involve shooting goats in Boven National Park. A small group of cattle breeders recently indicated its disapproval of this approach. Garnering support for solutions to combat the roaming cattle problem remains difficult. As a result, the project is not getting off the ground. In addition to sustainable agriculture policy, (some) farmers want additional acreage, food, and water for the goats to resolve the issue. The Government Commissioner is currently expending his best efforts to come up with a broadly supported solution.

#### *Roadwork*

A sum of EUR 7.2 million has been spent on the construction of 4.1 kilometres of road. This has rendered the St Eustatius infrastructure safer and more efficient. As stated above, the new roads are being equipped with drainage systems, within the context of the measures to combat erosion.

In May 2021, the "Road to Jeems" project was completed. A roundabout has been constructed on the road intersection between Jeems, the airport and the port. This roundabout – the first one on St Eustatius – regulates traffic and is sufficiently dimensioned to accommodate the expected increase in traffic volumes. I had the pleasure of opening this unique roundabout on 17 May last, together with the contractor. Another fourteen roads are currently listed for replacement, including the road to the renovated airport<sup>11</sup>.

#### *Airport*

Work on the renovation of F.D. Roosevelt Airport and on the construction of a new air traffic control tower and terminal commenced in 2017. Following the damage caused by hurricanes Irma and Maria, construction from scratch turned out to be more efficient than repairs. The new aviation terminal thus also meets international requirements.

The new airport will re-open in the autumn of 2021. Four check-in counters, three aviation company offices, and a luggage company enable St Eustatius to receive larger volumes of travellers.

#### *Connectivity*

The pandemic is pressuring air connectivity. Currently, WinAir is operating flights between St Eustatius and St Maarten only three days a week. Before the pandemic, it operated multiple flights daily.

In December 2020, the Dutch national government provided WinAir with a mortgage in order to safeguard air connectivity<sup>12</sup>. To maintain airline connections

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<sup>11</sup> Planning: 2021-2022.

<sup>12</sup> Aviation policy | Lower House of the States General.

between St Eustatius and Bonaire, the national government has subsidised the so-called CN Express. The last flight between the islands took place on 13 April.

In December 2020, Saba and St Eustatius received a Specific Allowance of EUR 2 million for a two-year pilot project involving a ferry service, aimed at improving connectivity between these islands. The first ferry is intended to sail on 1 November 2021.

### **In conclusion**

During my recent visit to St Eustatius, I witnessed that the Dutch government's promises to the islanders, made in 2018, have been redeemed in many respects. Residents and staff expressed their appreciation for the visible and tangible improvements.

During my visit, the Island Council indicated its intention to expedite the restoration of the provisions, which is understandable. However, the efforts must abide by the law and the associated authorities and criteria, whilst the final result that we are pursuing must be sustainable.

Prudence is, therefore, in order. The point of departure involved a situation in which both administrative and socio-economic tasks had been neglected, resulting in a great backlog to be made up. This work has not yet been completed, and maintaining the current pace in the restorations poses a genuine challenge for the Public Body of St Eustatius, especially now that COVID is hitting St Eustatius, and the global issue is affecting economic development and connectivity.

Aviation and shipping traffic ensure a limited measure of connection between the islands and between the island and the world. Should St Eustatius reopen its borders to tourists and other visitors, the currently low vaccination willingness of the population is going to pose a health risk that must be reduced.

The Statians are energetic and proud. Forces that assure me that this small island can have a grand future. I therefore trust that the next steps will be taken in a constructive and dynamic manner, together with the (acting) Government Commissioner and the Island Council.

The next report will be presented in November. In this report, I will once more inform your House of the progress made on St Eustatius to date.

The State Secretary for the Interior and Kingdom Relations,

R.W. Knops

## **Appendix 1: Looking back on the February 2018 intervention on St Eustatius**

### **The intervention**

In the period between 10 October 2010 and February 2018 – the dates of the political reforms – St Eustatius saw several events that did not tally with the authorities and responsibilities that the public bodies of Bonaire, St Eustatius, and Saba have within the Netherlands.

St Eustatius lacked collaboration at the political level; policy was not pursued in accordance with agreements; legislation was pushed aside; and financial management fell short in many respects. Despite a range of agreements, the Dutch government did not manage to stabilise the island<sup>13</sup>. A committee was appointed (committee of wise men) to investigate the mismanagement. The committee reached the conclusion that St Eustatius was faced with gross neglect of duties. In February 2018, the situation had become intolerable. The Senate and the House of Representatives unanimously adopted the bill on the "Temporary Act on St Eustatius Neglect of Duties" to take over administration. The Act thus removed local administrators and delegates from office.

They were replaced by a Government Commissioner, who put things right. Priority was given to normalising the administration and to supporting the officials of the Public Body of St Eustatius in order to enable and encourage them to perform their duties in spite of the intimidation by members of the Island Council<sup>14</sup>.

The Act on the Restoration of the Provisions for St Eustatius – which succeeded the Temporary Act on St Eustatius Neglect of Duties – comprises a phase model setting out the criteria to be met in each phase. This enables democracy to be returned to local administrators, for as briefly as possible and as long as necessary.<sup>15</sup>

Since September 2018, the Government Commissioner and his deputy have been working on the restoration of democracy and the development of the civil service. Restructuring and reorganisation will generate a more robust civil service. Key positions will be filled (by recruiting new staff or otherwise), and the right people will end up in the right places.

The restoration of democracy is being realised by implementing the criteria for each phase step by step<sup>16</sup>. The criteria pertaining to phase 1.0 have been satisfied, which has enabled elections to be held once more.

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<sup>13</sup> *Nabijheid of distantie, een wereld van verschil* [Proximity or distance, a world of difference]; p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> *Nabijheid of distantie, een wereld van verschil* [Proximity or distance, a world of difference]; p. 23.

<sup>15</sup> Letter to Parliament, 6<sup>th</sup> progress report on St Eustatius; Appendices on the state of affairs regarding the restoration of democracy on St Eustatius.

<sup>16</sup> This is schematised in Appendix 4.

The criteria pertaining to phase 2.0 are currently being addressed, enabling the next step towards the restoration of democracy.

### **Authorities of Island Council members**

The Island Council elections were held on 21 October 2020. The elections were won by the PLP (Progressive Labour Party), that obtained three of the five seats. The other two seats went to the DP (Democratic Party). Shortly after the elections, one of the two DP Island Council members resigned in order to continue as an independent member of the Island Council. In personal terms, the composition of the Island Council now equals its composition during the administrative intervention under the Temporary Act on Neglect of Duties.

The newly elected members of the Island Council were granted authorities<sup>17</sup> which they have since then exerted. Further details are provided in the paragraph headed "Administrative domain" of this progress report.

### **Focus areas since the intervention and its effects**

Since 2019, a wide range of projects has been launched to foster the further development of the population and the island. Several projects have already seen completion. For example, the backlog in road maintenance has been removed, social rental homes have been completed, and sections of nature reserves have received proper care. Youth projects have also reached the finish line. More information on these projects has been provided in the paragraphs on the various domains.

The effect of the intervention is also felt among officials. Reorganisation and the provision of appropriate resources have enabled officials to (increasingly) carry out their duties as they should.

For the islanders, the effects are also clearly visible and tangible. Local authorities have adopted a more transparent attitude; they are more helpful; they seek to engage in a dialogue; and they can be contacted through various channels.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the progress of projects relating to the development of local administration and the civil service. Major efforts are currently being expended to make up for the delay. Wherever this report refers to "delay", this is understood to mean the delay caused by COVID-19, unless indicated otherwise.

### **Communication from the Island Council and the Public Body of St Eustatius to the islanders**

A key element in the restoration of democracy is communication. The members of the Island Council and the Public Body of St Eustatius have taken steps in the field of communication, and both within and outside the organisation, communication with (important) stakeholders is being pursued.

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<sup>17</sup> Appendix 4 outlines the authorities.

The Public Body of St Eustatius is using multiple channels to inform the population of recent developments, completed projects, and up-to-date information on COVID-19 and the vaccination programme.

The communication channel used most frequently on the island is Facebook, followed by the updated website of the Public Body of St Eustatius and by PJB50 Radio Statia.

Facebook is used to provide residents with concise information. The Public Body of St Eustatius website provides more background information. As for the radio, the (acting) Government Commissioner is a guest on the "Shedding Lights" programme twice a week.

The dialogue with the population is a key point of attention for the Public Body of St Eustatius. For example, a Social Advisory Board has been appointed, Town Hall meetings with stakeholders have been organised (most recently involving farmers and fishermen), and a Central Dialogue has been set up to discuss socio-economic issues with the Business Association.

The COVID-19 containment restrictions have precluded the organisation of any further Town Hall meetings.

Within the civil service, the dialogue is also being pursued. Staff are involved in the development of a guideline for integrity: the Code of Conduct. A large staff meeting on this topic was held in early 2021.

Although headway is certainly being made, communication can be improved even further by communicating more effectively and by using new means of communication. The Public Body of St Eustatius has asked stakeholders to indicate points for improvement and is now working on a new strategic communications plan in the purview of communicating more proactively and directly with the islanders.

## **Appendix 2: Additional information on projects relating to the social domain**

### *Action Plan 12+*

The report by the children's ombudsman entitled *Het maakt uit waar je wieg heeft gestaan* [It matters where your cradle stood] has prompted the Public Body of St Eustatius to draw up an Action Plan 12+. This is aimed at expanding the opportunities for young people to transition to adulthood in a healthy, safe, and promising manner. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is supporting this Action Plan.

Since then, the authorities have embarked on the provision of a structural and diverse range of activities intended for young people aged 12 and up. The programme of activities is offered to more than 170 young people on a daily basis. It comprises, inter alia, homework assistance, sports, music, and theatre. Interconnecting meetings are held about and with young people, regarding the enhancement of facilities such as an open house for youngsters and a dance hall. Furthermore, meetings are held about sports competencies for young people and about exchanges with Saba. However, this is still awaiting approval by the governing body. In part, these meetings are related to the Caribbean Netherlands Relief Packages provided by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. In addition, the Public Body of St Eustatius has been using resources from this Ministry to recruit additional youth workers. Collaboration between the various partners within the social domain is being fostered in these efforts.

### *#MyNewWorld and International Conference on Children's Rights*

In November 2020, the International Taskforce on Children's Rights celebrated its five-year anniversary with a festive conference. The conference was held online and attracted participants from all parts of the Kingdom. I myself also entered into discussions with young people from St Eustatius.

The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has joined forces with UNICEF to spur improvement of children's rights in the Caribbean Netherlands. An online participation programme is addressing the themes of involvement and participation of young people. This young people's panel enables youngsters within the Kingdom to contribute ideas on the spending of available resources. They have actively provided input and the young people's panel is currently elaborating the ideas for spending this budget.

### *BES 2021-2024 Administrative Agreement on Combating Domestic Violence and Child Abuse*

On 7 December 2020, the Public Body of St Eustatius signed the BES 2021-2024 Administrative Agreement on Combating Domestic Violence and Child Abuse. Among other things, this sets out agreements on setting up a collective advisory centre and hotline, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, for the Public Body of St Eustatius and the Public Body of Saba.

Staff turnover has caused some delay, as a result of which the phased opening of the Bovenwinden advisory centre and hotline has now been scheduled for October 2021. Until such time, domestic violence victims can apply to the police and the youth welfare division of the Public Body of St Eustatius for help. In addition, the Administrative Agreement sets out that safe shelter for victims of domestic violence and child abuse will be available. Such shelter is currently being provided, on a temporary basis, by the Public Body of St Eustatius. A structural option for the reception of victims of domestic violence and child abuse is being elaborated.

#### *Childcare*

The BES(t) 4 Kids programme is intended to improve the quality of childcare and to ensure that parents can afford such care. Training programmes are provided for staff. Collaboration with childcare organisations in the European Netherlands is being established via "Twinning": similar organisations join forces and learn from one another regarding comparable challenges.

The development of new out-of-school care facilities is currently being elaborated further. In addition, the childcare organisations make use of the temporary scheme that provides childcare place grants for financially weak parents. Parents and childcare organisations are involved in the consultations regarding the bill on childcare in the Caribbean Netherlands.

### **Appendix 3: Analysis of communication by Public Body of St Eustatius on the road to Island Council elections**

During the policy debate on Kingdom relations, held in the Senate on 6 April, I promised Senators Rosenmöller and Dittrich an analysis of the communications in the run-up to the Island Council elections of 21 October 2020.

The external communications of the Public Body of St Eustatius served two purposes: to enthuse and inform potential politicians and to inform residents about the organisation of the elections.

#### *The build-up to the elections*

Democracy is being restored in four phases, each covered by its own criteria. In order to be able to hold Island Council elections, five criteria needed to be met<sup>18</sup>. In the next phase – phase 2.0 – one such criterion is a training programme for potential politicians, enabling them to explore the duties and authorities of Island Council membership.

#### *The preparation of potential politicians*

In collaboration with the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), the Electoral Council, and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Public Body of St Eustatius compiled an information and training programme for potential politicians. The elections were announced on 23 September 2019. Shortly thereafter, preparations for the programme commenced.

On 20 and 21 February 2020, delegates from the NIMD, the Electoral Council, and the VNG visited the island to attend an informative session on the pre-election process. This session was intended to enthuse (new) potential politicians and to provide information on the requirements for nomination and on the regulations for campaigning. The session was attended by forty people.

The training programme comprised ten modules, working up to the elections in October 2020. Unfortunately, the pandemic that struck in March 2020 caused a delay. In May 2020, however, the process was resumed following a second – digital – kick-off. Enthusiasm for (participation in) the elections gradually grew, spurred on in particular by the words of Saban politician Chris Johnson and Bonaire politician Nina den Heijer.

The second track commenced on nomination day (7 September 2020) and focused on the 27 candidate politicians who had been registered by then. The candidate politicians received digital media training and information on campaigning. The attendance rates of the non-mandatory training varied.

#### *Information campaign for islanders*

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix 4 for more information.



For the islanders, a general information campaign was organised, explaining how to stand for office. In addition, the islanders were regularly informed about the elections.

On 9 September 2020, the Public Body of St Eustatius launched the information campaign under the slogan of "Who will speak on your behalf?". Its goal was to set residents thinking and urge them to vote. The Public Body of St Eustatius used several communication channels, including radio (spots and interviews), print media, billboards at strategic locations, Facebook, and its own website.

The messages and videos focused on such key elements of democracy as: who has the right to vote, why is voting important, and what documents are needed to be allowed to vote. Furthermore, they communicated the locations at which the elections would be held: on account of the COVID-19 containment measures, two polling stations were set up rather than one.

The authorities also took account of functionally illiterate residents. In October 2020, a motion graphic (short, informative animation) was made for this group. In addition, an email address was created<sup>19</sup> to which the public and politicians could direct questions and comments.

#### *Facebook*

Facebook – the most common means of communication – was used for a massive election campaign. Messages were posted on both the regular Facebook pages of the Public Body of St Eustatius and on a special Facebook page focused on the Island Council elections<sup>20</sup>.

The posts featured short, accessible messages and videos. Local residents were filmed to enhance the recognisability of the local population. The language of communication for messages and videos was English, which minimised potential language barriers. The messages were posted several times a week in order to retain the population's attention. Furthermore, the Public Body of St Eustatius used popular pages of third parties on the island to share all its messages on the elections, thus expanding its scope.

#### *Radio broadcast*

During the period July – October 2020, the "Shedding Light" radio programme was used several times to provide residents with information. Twice, a senior staff member of the Census Office provided information on the elections. Other frequent guests in this radio broadcast were the Government Commissioner and his deputy.

#### *Town Hall meetings*

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<sup>19</sup> Statia2020elections@statiagov.com.

<sup>20</sup> Island Council Elections 2020.

To foster the dialogue between the population and the Public Body of St Eustatius, Town Hall meetings were organised. On 20 February 2020, an awareness and information meeting was held during which several speakers reiterated the importance of the elections; the audience was given the opportunity to ask questions. Unfortunately, the restrictions ensuing from the pandemic prevented the organisation of any subsequent Town Hall meetings.

#### *Print media*

A few weeks before the elections, a brochure with detailed information on the elections was delivered door to door. Furthermore, several posters were put up at key locations. In addition, ads were placed in the Daily Herald, but on account of COVID-19 this paper was published only once a week.

#### *Elections during the COVID-19 pandemic*

As the elections took place during the pandemic, the islanders were informed of the precautions in place to ensure maximum safety when voting. To this end, an instruction video was made, explaining how to vote in accordance with the COVID-19 containment measures. The film was intended to instil confidence in the residents that voting was safe, despite the pandemic.

#### *Conclusion*

As a result of the pandemic, the communication process that was initiated in February, prior to the elections, was adapted at an early stage. At the end of May, the process was resumed. Communication on the elections peaked between July and October 2020. Physical meetings were replaced by digital ones.

The Island Council elections are the first elections within the Kingdom to take place during the COVID-19 pandemic. Proper organisation and efficient communication have ensured that the elections proceeded safely, with a turnout of 76.9 per cent. The elections have subsequently served as an example for other elections within the Kingdom.

## Appendix 4: Phase model and associated authorities

RC& EILANDSRAAD	EILANDSRAAD BENOEMT GEDEPUTEERDEN VERSCHILLENDE BEVOEGDHEDEN IN DEZE FASEN		
FASE 1	FASE 2.0	FASE 2.1	FASE 2.2
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. KIESREGISTER GEREED</li> <li>2. REORGANISATIE AMBTELIJKE APPARAAT</li> <li>3. PROCEDURES EN WERKINSTRUCTIE AMBTELIJKE ORGANISATIE EN GRIFFIE GEREED</li> <li>4. REKENKAMER INGESTELD</li> <li>5. OPLEIDINGS-PROGRAMMA POTENTIELE POLITICI INGESTELD</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PROCEDURES EN WERKINSTRUCTIES BESTUURSCOLLEGE AFGEROND</li> <li>2. VERORDENINGEN VASTSTELLEN EN IN WERKING</li> <li>3. A) ADMINISTRATIES VERGUNNINGEN/ ONTHEFFINGS-VERLENING B) SUBSIDIE C) FUNCTIE KADASTER OP ORDE</li> <li>4. TOEZICHTEN HANDHAVING (BELEID EN UITVOERING)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. AFRONDEN AANGEBODEN OPLEIDINGS-PROGRAMMA AMBTELIJKE VAKMANSCHAP AMBTENAREN</li> <li>2. AFRONDEN AANGEBODEN OPLEIDINGS-PROGRAMMA RAADSLEDEN EN GEDEPUTEERDEN</li> <li>3. PERSONEELS-BELEID OP ORDE EN RECHTS-POSITIONELE REGELGEVING OP NIEUW VASTGESTELD</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DIGITALISEREN EN CENTRALISEREN FINANCIËLE PROCESSEN</li> <li>2. PLANNINGEN CONTROL-CYCLUS CONFORM DE FINBES</li> <li>3. ALLE ACTIES VAN FINANCIËEL BEHEER GEREED</li> </ol>

**reference**  
J21-0000290787

## NA AFRONDING FASE 1 - EILANDSRAAD WORDT GEKOZEN

### CRITERIA:

1) KIESREGISTER GEREED / 2) REORGANISATIE AMBTELIJKE APPARAAT / 3) PROCEDURES EN WERKINSTRUCTIE AMBTELIJKE ORGANISATIE EN GRIFFIE GEREED / 4) REKENKAMER INGESTELD / 5) OPLEIDINGS-PROGRAMMA POTENTIELE POLITICI INGESTELD

### Bevoegdheden ER

1. Het vragen- en interpellatierecht (159 WoIBES)
2. De eilandsraad kan het indienen van moties regelen in het reglement van orde (17 WoIBES)
3. Het amendementsrecht (151 WoIBES)
4. Het initiatiefrecht (150 WoIBES)

5. Het vaststellen van verordeningen (autonoom en medebewind) (149 Ism 152 WoIBES), nuw verordeningen ovg de Wet FinBES. De verordeningen moeten worden goedgekeurd door de regeringscommissaris alvorens deze worden vastgesteld (10 Herstelwet).

### Beperking ER

1. Het vragen- en interpellatierecht (159 WoIBES)
2. De eilandsraad kan het indienen van moties regelen in het reglement van orde (17 WoIBES)
3. Het amendementsrecht (151 WoIBES)
4. Het initiatiefrecht (150 WoIBES)

### Bevoegdheden RC

1. De regeringscommissaris blijft in de plaats treden van het bestuurscollege en de gezaghebber.
2. De regeringscommissaris blijft in de plaats treden van de bevoegdheden van de eilandsraad ovg de Wet FinBES en mbt de ambtenaren van de griffie (7 en 8 Herstelwet).
3. Alle verordeningen die de eilandsraad wilt vaststellen moeten, alvorens daadwerkelijke vaststelling, worden goedgekeurd door de regeringscommissaris (10 Herstelwet).

Toelichting:  
Deze bevoegdheden en beperkingen zijn momenteel aan de orde. (Fase 1 is afgerond)

**Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations**  
Directorate-General for Kingdom Relations

Department of Financial Affairs and Economics

**Reference**  
2021-0000290787

**NA AFRONDING FASE 2.0 –  
EILANDSRAAD BENOEMT GEDEPUTEERDEN / REGERINGSCOMMISSARIS en  
GEDEPUTEERDEN VORMEN BESTUURSCOLLEGE**

**CRITERIA AFGEROND:**

1) PROCEDURES EN WERKINSTRUCTIES BESTUURSCOLLEGE AFGEROND / 2) VERORDENINGEN VASTSTELLEN EN IN WERKING / 3A) ADMINISTRATIES VERGUNNINGEN/ ONTHEFFINGS-VERLENING / 3B) SUBSIDIE / 3C) FUNCTIE KADASTER OP ORDE / 4) TOEZICHT EN HANDHAVING (BELEID EN UITVOERING)

**Toelichting:**  
Deze bevoegdheden en beperkingen gaan gelden indien aan de criteria behorend bij Fase 2.0 is voldaan. Dan gaat Fase 2.0 in.

**Bevoegdheden BC**

1. Alle autonome en medebewindstaken van het bestuurscollege.
2. Bevoegdheden inzake toezicht op de naleving van wet- en regelgeving en de handhaving daarvan.
3. Het bestuurscollege benoemt zelf een eilandsecretaris. Dit besluit behoeft de goedkeuring van de regeringscommissaris

**Beperking BC/ER**

1. De taken/bevoegdheden obv de Wet FinBES.
2. De taken/bevoegdheden tov de ambtelijke organisatie, inclusief rechtspositionele beslissingen (benoeming, schorsing en ontslag).

**Bevoegdheden RC**

1. De regeringscommissaris blijft in de plaats treden van de gezaghebber.
2. De regeringscommissaris blijft in de plaats treden van bevoegdheden van de eilandsraad en het bestuurscollege obv de Wet FinBES en de ambtelijke organisatie, inclusief de griffie (7 en 8 Herstelwet).
3. De regeringscommissaris doet de reguliere goedkeuring van verordeningen van de eilandsraad ipv de Rijksvertegenwoordiger.
4. Alle besluiten van het bestuurscollege behoeven de goedkeuring van de regeringscommissaris (13 ism 10 (nieuw) Herstelwet). Dit is in aanvulling op regulier repressief toezicht op de eilandsraad en het bestuurscollege ogv de WolBES.

**Ministry of the Interior  
and Kingdom Relations**  
Directorate-General for  
Kingdom Relations

Department of Financial  
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## FASE 2.1 – REGERINGSCOMMISSARIS EN GEDEPUTEERDEN VORMEN BESTUURSCOLLEGE

### CRITERIA AFGEROND:

1) AFRONDEN AANGEBODEN OPLEIDINGS-PROGRAMMA AMBTELIJK VAKMANSCHAP AMBTENAREN / 2) AFRONDEN AANGEBODEN OPLEIDINGS-PROGRAMMA RAADSLEDEN EN GEDEPUTEERDEN / 3) PERSONEELS-BELEID OP ORDEEN RECHTS-POSITIONELE REGELGEVING OP NIEUW VASTGESTELD

Toelichting:  
Deze bevoegdheden en beperkingen gaan gelden indien aan de criteria van Fase 2.1 is voldaan. Dan gaat Fase 2.1 in.

### Bevoegdheden BC/ER

1. De taken/bevoegdheden van de eilandsraad en het bestuurscollege tov de ambtelijke organisatie, inclusief de griffie, met inbegrip van het nemen van rechtspositionele beslissingen (benoeming, schorsing en ontslag van ambtenaren) (14 Herstelwet).

### Beperking BC/ER

1. De taken/bevoegdheden obv de FinBES.

### Bevoegdheden RC

1. De regeringscommissaris doet de reguliere goedkeuring van personeelsbesluiten, ipv de Rijksvertegenwoordiger (13 ism 10 (nieuw) Herstelwet).

**Ministry of the Interior  
and Kingdom Relations**  
Directorate-General for  
Kingdom Relations

Department of Financial  
Affairs and Economics

**Reference**  
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**FASE 2.2 – REGERINGSCOMMISSARIS EN GEDEPUTEERDEN VORMEN BESTUURSCOLLEGE**

**CRITERIA AFGEROND:**  
1) DIGITALISEREN EN CENTRALISEREN FINANCIËLE PROCESSEN / 2) PLANNING EN CONTROL-CYCLUS CONFORM DE FINBES / 3) ALLE ACTIES VAN FINANCIËEL BEHEER GEREED

**Toelichting:**  
Deze bevoegdheden en beperkingen gaan gelden indien aan de criteria van Fase 2.2 is voldaan. Dan gaat Fase 2.2 in.

**Bevoegdheden BC/ER**

1. De taken/bevoegdheden van de eilandsraad en het bestuurscollege ogv de Wet FinBES (15 Herstelwet).

**Bevoegdheden RC**

1. De regeringscommissaris doet de reguliere goedkeuring van alle besluiten ogv de FinBES, ipw de Rijksvertegenwoordiger. Dit geldt dus voor alle besluiten van het bestuurscollege (zie fase 2.0), ook die van financiële aard, en die van de eilandsraad wanneer een verordening van financiële aard is.

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Directorate-General for Kingdom Relations

Department of Financial Affairs and Economics

**Reference**  
2021-0000290787

## Appendix 5: St Eustatius projects funded from specific allowances

The table below reflects a random selection of the projects funded from the specific allowances paid out to St Eustatius.

	Active
	Completed
	Inactive

Name of project	Roll-out	Status
Reconstruction: Specific allowance for Waterman service following hurricane Irma	2018	
Reconstruction: Emergency relief measures following hurricane Irma	2018	
Reconstruction: Statia nature and environment	2018	
Reconstruction: Assessment of Madam Theatre	2018	
Reconstruction: Preservation of wall behind Stenapa office	2018	
Reconstruction: Fence around government building	2018	
Reconstruction: Reforestation	2018	
Reconstruction: Repairs to ruins	2018	
Reconstruction: Repair of buoys Marine Park mooring system	2018	
Reconstruction: Restoration of botanical garden	2018	
Reconstruction: Restoration of sea turtle breeding ground	2018	
Reconstruction: Restoration of coral	2018	
Reconstruction: Restoration of agriculture, cattle breeding, fishery	2018	
Reconstruction: Repairs to Dutch Reformed church	2018	
Reconstruction: Repairs to houses	2018	
Reconstruction: Statia public space and real estate	2018	
Reconstruction: Unpaved roads	2018	
Reconstruction: Stabilisation of St Eustatius cliff	2018	
Reconstruction: Reopening of Slavenpad	2018	
Reconstruction: Iguana population	2018	
Reconstruction: Repairs to historic buildings	2018	
Reconstruction: Water supply to farms	2018	
Reconstruction: Water storage facilities	2018	
Reconstruction: Public cemeteries	2018	
Financial management improvement plan	2018	
Emergency measures to combat cliff erosion	2018	



Strengthening nature management	2018	
Combating erosion	2018	
Nature awareness	2018	
Coral restoration	2018	
Rat control	2018	
Roaming Animals	2018	
Waste management	2018	
Quick win waste campaign	2018	
Car wreck removal project	2018	
Disaster management	2018	
BES Security Act	2018	
Public healthcare	2018	
Domestic violence and children's rights policy coordinator	2018	
BES(t) 4 Kids	2018	
Social opportunity tracks - New Challenge	2018	
Empowerment of teenage girls	2018	
Social worker	2018	
Pilot job programme "Statia Serves / Statia Does"	2018	
School swimming subsidy	2018	
Higher contribution from Public Body of St Eustatius for employment twinning	2018	
Life Coaches	2018	
Job matching and job programmes	2018	
St Eustatius road programme	2018	
Combating poverty and youth unemployment	2018	
Strengthening social (voluntary) organisations	2018	
Diabetes prevention	2018	
Removing backlog in repairs of private homes	2018	
Neighbourhood sports coach	2018	
"Statia in Shape" youth sports association	2018	
Seamen training course	2018	
Outdoor Fitness Park, location Wilhelminaplein square	2018	
Reconstruction: Home repairs 2nd phase	2019	
Reconstruction: St Eustatius port	2019	
Reconstruction: Road maintenance	2019	
Decision on reorganisation costs (friction costs)	2019	
Grant for assessment in ongoing Public Body of St Eustatius reorganisation and training procedure	2019	


Grant for Smart Solutions "MD" Process	2019	
Updating of PIVA (Personal Information Provision Netherlands Antilles) system	2019	
Grant for St Eustatius Audit Office	2019	
Decision on St Eustatius elections	2019	
Administrative agreement on domestic violence and child abuse	2019	
Grant for Taskforce on Children's Rights Conference	2019	
Purchase of waste incineration plant for St Eustatius	2019	
Renovation of the bend near Smoke Alley	2019	
Implementation of sports policy	2019	
Maritime infrastructure, protection of port area coastline	2019	
Renovation of 5 sheltered accommodations	2019	
Childcare and after-school care	2019	
Caribbean Netherlands Care and Safety House	2020	
Caribbean Sports and Prevention Agreement	2020	
St Eustatius food aid	2020	
Grant from St Eustatius specific allowance for digitalisation of Public Body of St Eustatius	2020	
"Setting to work together" programme	2020	
Grant for expanding civil service capacity	2020	
Grant for "Good Governance" IT project regional budget	2020	

## Appendix 6: Factsheet Sint Eustatius 2017-2021


Ministry of the Interior  
and Kingdom Relations  
Directorate-General for  
Kingdom Relations

Department of Financial  
Affairs and Economics

Reference  
2021-0000290787



Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en  
Koninkrijksrelaties



# Sint Eustatius 2017 – 2021

### Aanleg wegen

In totaal is er 4,1 km aan wegen aangelegd.

- De investeringen in Cherry Tree, Jeems Road, Smoke Alley, Mansion Road, White Hook en de rotonde bedragen \$7,2 mln.
- Er staan reeds 14 andere wegen op de planning om aangelegd te worden, waaronder de Airport Boulevard.

### Waterzuivering

Momenteel wordt er 140.000 m<sup>3</sup> per jaar aan schoon drinkwater geproduceerd.

- Er zijn in het afgelopen jaar drie projecten uitgevoerd ter verbetering van de toegankelijkheid en betrouwbaarheid van de drinkwatervoorziening: **vervanging en verbreding van de hoofdtransportleiding, vergroten van de waterslag van 1000 m<sup>3</sup> naar 4000 m<sup>3</sup> en het vergroten van de productiecapaciteit.**
- Momenteel is 45% van de inwoners aangesloten op het drinkwatermet (850 aansluitingen). Dit is een **toename** van 120 aansluitingen ten opzichte van 2020.

### Wederopbouw na orkaan Irma

- Er is €43 mln. beschikbaar gesteld aan Sint Eustatius voor wederopbouw.
- Voor het stabiliseren van de klifwand onder Fort Oranje is er in totaal €10,4 mln. beschikbaar gesteld.

### Verbetering internetverbinding

Het internet is 20% sneller geworden.

- Het internet is voor klanten van EUTEL bv. \$10 goedkoper geworden. Deze korting geldt voor de aankomende 5 jaar.
- Ministerie van EZK heeft het **vaste aansluittarief** voor gebruikers van **elektriciteit verlaagd** tot \$0.
- Eveneens is een subsidie geïntroduceerd voor het gebruik van vast internet met een aansluiting van 5,25 per maand.

### Vergroten leefbaarheid

- De kinderbijslag is van 2017 tot 2021 verhoogd van \$ 42 naar \$ 87.
- Het wettelijk minimumloon is met 7% gestegen sinds 2019.
- Er is door Ministerie van SZW ter verbetering van de **kinderopvang structureel € 9,8 mln.** beschikbaar gesteld, dat in 2021 verder toeneemt tot € 14 mln.

### Vrije uitkering

- De vrije uitkering is vanaf 2017, \$ 10.827.820, gestegen naar \$ 13.634.334 in 2020.