

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will the Netherlands become the boss on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba after 10.10.10?

No. Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba will continue – just as is the case now - to have two governments. This will then be the local government and the Dutch government. The Dutch government will take the place of that of the Netherlands Antilles. The local government remains the most important government for you. The local government is controlled by its own elected representatives, the Island Council.

Who will be doing what after 10.10.10?

The Dutch government will assume the governmental tasks of the Netherlands Antilles on 10.10.10, such as the police force, the fire brigade and levying taxes. In addition, tasks regarding benefits (state old age pension, social security, unemployment), public health, youth care and education will become the responsibility of the Dutch government. The Netherlands will work together closely with the island authorities of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba when carrying out these tasks. St. Eustatius and Saba have reached agreement with Netherlands on who does what after 10.10.10. Agreement has not yet been reached with Bonaire. The Netherlands is willing to enter into constructive consultations with the island authorities of Bonaire regarding the division of tasks.

Will the own culture of the islands be preserved?

Yes, the residents of the islands are responsible in the first place for ensuring that their own culture is preserved. The Netherlands is pleased to support this. Together we can ensure that the own culture of the Caribbean islands is preserved.

Will many Dutch civil servants be stationed in Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba?

No. The Netherlands has temporarily stationed Dutch civil servants on the islands in order to set up the Dutch government and the necessary activities. Local people will be hired for the new jobs.

State Secretary Bijleveld sent the Executive Committee of Bonaire a letter in December in which she informed that the investments of the Netherlands in Bonaire would temporarily be suspended. Why?

In the past years, the Netherlands has initiated many projects based on the choice for a public body. Now that the Executive Committee of Bonaire is questioning this choice, the Netherlands can no longer continue with the execution of these projects. The Netherlands hopes to soon come to an agreement with Bonaire again so that the activities can be resumed. This concerns, among others, projects in the area of healthcare, education, renovation of the runway and the construction of the police station and the detention centre.

Can the islands continue to count on the Netherlands after 10.10.10?

Yes, the islands can certainly continue to count on the Netherlands. The Netherlands is and remains a reliable partner that wishes to work together constructively with the island authorities in order to improve the facilities for the residents.

A new tax proposal especially for Bonaire, Saint Eustatius and Saba is being put before the Dutch parliament. Why is a new tax proposal necessary and why are taxes going to be raised?

First of all, the new tax system will be a simplification for private individuals and companies. Taxes are not being raised. Some taxes will even be lower. The existing Antillean income tax, for example, is based on a sliding scale that varies from 13 to 49.9 percent including surcharges and excluding premiums. The new tax proposals contain are based on a fixed rate of 30.4%. This includes the premiums for state old age pensions, surviving dependants' benefits, healthcare benefits and even the new general healthcare insurance.

So everyone will be required to pay 30.4 percent taxes?

No. Everyone is also entitled to a tax-free sum of Naf 16,000. If a man and a woman both work in one family, they both are entitled to this whole tax free sum.

I see European Dutch people collecting tax on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba. Is all that money going to the Netherlands?

No. The European Dutch people are working on reducing the backlog at the Tax and Customs Administration of the Netherlands Antilles at the request of the Netherlands Antilles. Not one penny of the tax revenues go to the Netherlands. The money is largely intended for the islands. Part of the tax revenues are paid to the country Netherlands Antilles.

Will more aliens be coming to Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba?

No, the rules for allowing aliens to enter the country will remain largely the same.

Will the minimum wage and social security benefits become as high as in the Netherlands?

No. Bringing the wages and benefits up to the same level as that in the Netherlands would not be good for the economy and for employment on the islands. As higher wages and benefits lead to higher prices. People will then no longer be able to purchase as much as now and tourist would stay away. The latter would in turn lead to a loss of jobs.

Will the retirement age go up?

Yes. The age where people are entitled to a state old age pension (AOV) will gradually rise from 60 to 65 years.

A Centre for Youth and Family will be established. Are Dutch people going to prescribe how parents must raise their children?

No. Raising their children is and remains the responsibility of the parents themselves. Parents will have to determine the norms and values that they consider important when raising their children. However, everyone can contact the centres for Youth and Family for help and advice.

Can the Netherlands do anything about the long waiting list for inexpensive rental homes on Bonaire?

Inexpensive housing is a responsibility of the local housing corporation and the island authorities. The Netherlands offers the local housing corporation the possibility to work together with Dutch housing corporations. St. Eustatius and Saba have already made agreements with the housing corporation Woonlinie in Zaltbommel. Woonlinie provides assistance with the management, the organisation development and preparing and carrying out construction and renovation plans on Saint Eustatius and Saba.

Will everyone qualify for healthcare costs insurance.

Yes. Everyone will be insured against healthcare costs. No distinction is made with regard to age, health or nationality. Self-employed persons also qualify for this insurance. No monthly or annual premium will have to be paid. The costs of the insurance are financed partly with tax revenues and paid partly by the Netherlands.

Is it the case that only Dutch may be spoken after 10.10.10 on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba?

No, of course not. After 10.10.10 Papiamentu and English will still be spoken on the islands. State Secretary Bijleveld of Kingdom Relations has even proposed that it be laid down in the law that Papiamentu and English are accepted languages.



Questions or comments?

If you have a question or comment about the Regional Service Centre or about the constitutional process, then you can contact us. We are pleased to be of assistance!

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