



To the President of the House of Representatives
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**Ministry of the Interior and
Kingdom Relations**
DGOBDR
Democracy
Turfmarkt 147
The Hague
PO Box 20011
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Reference
2024-0000172577

Your reference

Annex(es)
5

Date April 22, 2024
Subject Letter on follow-up to apology for slavery past

'We do not seek to harm anyone, and we are just seeking our freedom. Do not all people stem from a common father Adam and Eve? Did I err in freeing twenty-two brothers from prison, where they were unjustly held? Father, even an animal is treated better than us; when it is wounded, it is cared for', the freedom fighter Tula once said. These are moving words, but also beautiful words that give freedom and equality a universal character.

In recent months, important steps have been taken as a follow-up to the apology for the slavery past. This letter is intended to inform the House about the progress of the follow-up process, as promised in the letter of 23 June 2023.¹

Reader's guide

Below we will first look back on the dialogue sessions held in the last six months in the European Netherlands and the progress meetings in St. Maarten and The Hague, and discuss the outcomes, as promised by the State Secretary for the Interior and Kingdom Relations (section 1).² We will then inform the House about the proposed deployment of the €33.3 million made available for policy reinforcements in the European Netherlands and the Caribbean region of the Kingdom (section 2). We will do the same with regard to the subsidy scheme for social initiatives (section 3). Next, we will discuss the follow-up process in Suriname (section 4). Finally, we will set out the current situation in respect of the Memorial Committee and the Slavery Past Memorial Year (section 5), the National Slavery Museum (section 6) and the introduction of equal treatment legislation in Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba (section 7).

1. Dialogue

1.1 Dialogue sessions in European Netherlands

The past six months have been all about dialogue. At the end of 2023, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (hereafter: BZK) organised dialogue sessions in the European Netherlands in collaboration with the research

¹ Parliamentary Papers I 2022/23, 36284, no. C.

² Parliamentary Paper number 2023Z17730.

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agency *TrueTalk*. We exchanged views with participants on what the Slavery Past Memorial Committee should look like, and what shape the scheme for social initiatives in the European Netherlands should take.

These subjects were discussed with 270 descendants, in meetings held throughout the country and online, over a period of 18 days. We had tried to select a wide range of participants in terms of age, organisational and emotional involvement and cultural background, so as to ensure that all communities of descendants were included. Again, the dialogue sessions made it clear that the consequences of our past are still visible and palpable in the present. Inequality is a deep-rooted theme which affects people personally and encompasses all backgrounds, groups and cultures.

The outcomes of the dialogue sessions were taken into account in the preparation of the draft subsidy scheme for social initiatives in the European Netherlands. For example, the scheme has to be easily accessible for grassroots organisations, without them getting bogged down in complicated application procedures. The insights will also be taken on board where commemoration is concerned. The Kingdom-wide Memorial Committee will develop its activities based on the insights we obtained. The results of the dialogue sessions were compiled into a final report. This report is enclosed with this letter (see Annex 1).

On 28 November 2022, the House asked the Minister of BZK to submit a copy of his reply to the letter from the Bonaire Dialogue Group of 3 November 2022 regarding colonialism and the slavery past and the follow-up to the 'Chains of the Past' report.³ This reply is also enclosed (see Annex 2). Following the apology for the slavery past on 19 December 2022, BZK engaged in talks with the Bonaire Dialogue Group.

1.2 Progress meetings

Since the progress report of June 23, 2023, two progress meetings have taken place with representatives from the various involved communities, on October 1st and 2nd in Sint Maarten, and on January 31st in The Hague. At both meetings, we discussed the points of departure and parameters of both the scheme for social initiatives and the Kingdom-wide Memorial Committee with descendants and other stakeholders. We will take the outcomes of these discussions into account when working out the details of the follow-up process. The progress meetings again emphasised the importance of acting carefully, with active involvement of descendants and other stakeholders in all the phases of the process.

2. Policy reinforcements

On 15 February 2024, we informed the House about the geographic distribution of the resources for policy reinforcements and the scheme for social initiatives.⁴ Below, we will first explain how and on which themes we intend to spend the €33.3 million for policy reinforcements in the European Netherlands. We will then

³ Parliamentary Papers 35925 VII, no. 167.

⁴ Parliamentary Papers 2023-2024, 36284 no. 36.

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explain the steps we are taking to allocate the €33.3 million in the Caribbean region of the Kingdom. The follow-up process for Suriname will be discussed in section 4.

2.1 Policy reinforcements in European Netherlands

Free change of name

As announced in the letter of 19 December 2022, the Ministry of Justice and Security (hereafter: J&V) is working on the temporary scheme to allow descendants of enslaved people to change their names without charge. This may lead to the launch of a permanent scheme. For this purpose, the government will make €14.9 million available from the slavery past fund.

On 7 March 2024, the Council of State issued its opinion on the draft Decree on Changes of Surname by Descendants of Enslaved People and Temporary Funding.⁵ This opinion supports the current approach to make the scheme easily accessible for the descendants of enslaved people, and the manner in which the option of a free change of name is provided. The aim is for the Decree to enter into force on 1 July 2024.

Anti-discrimination policy

The government will step up its efforts to fight discrimination and racism, as indicated in the government response of 19 December 2022. In order to further increase the findability, visibility and reporting accessibility of the anti-discrimination agencies (hereafter: ADVs), the Ministry of BZK will in 2024 and 2025 develop and roll out a public communication strategy in line with the campaign '*Meld het wél! Discriminatie.nl*' ('You should tell! Discriminatie.nl'). For this purpose, the government will make €1.7 million available from the slavery past fund.

On 1 January 2024, the ADVs joined forces under the name Discriminatie.nl. This also marked the launch of the new national reporting centre with the website www.discriminatie.nl and the telephone number 0800-0880. The Ministry of BZK funded the '*Meld het wél! Discriminatie.nl*' campaign with a subsidy out of its regular budget, and did not draw on the slavery past fund.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (hereinafter: SZW) will commission a knowledge synthesis on everyday racism stemming from the legacy of slavery. In a knowledge synthesis, information from existing research is combined with research on existing interventions from practice.

The aim is to gain a better understanding of how the legacy of slavery influences contemporary experiences of discrimination and racism. Additionally, in 2024, the ministries of BZK and SZW will jointly commission an exploratory study on how various parties can collectively promote a social norm over several years to prevent discrimination and racism in society. The exploration will focus on a potential approach, involvement of parties, and required budget. The exploration

⁵ <https://www.raadvanstate.nl/adviezen/@141121/w16-23-00392-ii/>.

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should determine which parties could potentially undertake this task. These could be both public and private entities, such as municipalities, educational institutions, trade unions, employer and employee organizations, and companies. The knowledge synthesis and the exploratory study aim to identify interventions that contribute to preventing discrimination and racism. The government will invest €3.8 million from the slavery past fund in this project.

Heritage

As promised in the letter of 19 December 2022, the government will make further investments in the conservation and further development of museums and archives, and in the protection of cultural heritage. Existing museum and archive collections contain sources about the slavery past. There are also organisations which, with the help of a heritage community, find and preserve new sources, widely sharing the associated stories and encouraging discussions about them. It is important that descendants have a central role in this. We will therefore use the funds made available to support institutions which offer this pluralistic perspective of cultural heritage. Discussions are currently being held about the form and content. For this purpose, the government will make €4.5 million available from the slavery past fund for the years 2024-2034.

Multi-year research programme

On 15 June 2023, the report *Staat en Slavernij* ('State and Slavery') was published.⁶ In order to give direction and inspiration to an independent follow-up study, the steering group of representatives from the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), the International Institute of Social History (IISG), the University of Curaçao and the National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy (NiNsee) have presented a knowledge agenda on 12th of April (see Annex 3).

With the completion and presentation of the knowledge agenda, the steering group has formally been dissolved. The government is very grateful to the steering group for its contribution to this important issue and the impressive results it has achieved. This knowledge agenda forms the basis for the multi-year research programme regarding the complex impact of the slavery past on the present. The government will make €1.7 million available from the slavery past fund to give an initial impulse to this multi-year research programme.

The government's primary concern in spending these resources is that these should be made available in an easily accessible manner to researchers throughout the Kingdom. This will ensure, for example, that researchers who are not associated with a university or institution or who specialise in oral history are eligible as well.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (hereafter: OCW) has initiated a multi-year research programme regarding the Dutch colonial slavery past, for which it makes €1.5 million available out of the OCW budget. This initiative is a programme within the National Science Agenda (NWA) and is being implemented

⁶ Parliamentary Papers II 2022-2023, 36284 no. 31.

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by the Dutch Research Council (NWO). With NWO acting as co-financier, the programme has a total value of €3 million. The NWA provides departments and other governmental bodies with the opportunity to actively engage in research programming around important societal issues.

The idea is to search for new ways of conducting research within this program on the legacy of slavery to uncover understudied forms of its impact on today's society. This quest for innovation aimed at obtaining new knowledge will be carried out in partnership with the community. The steering group's knowledge agenda is in line with this overarching theme and may serve as a guideline for the research to be developed. The Ministry of OCW is fleshing out the programme in close cooperation with NWO, the Ministry of BZK, and descendants and other stakeholders.

Knowledge Centre

Work is underway on a national Slavery Museum in Amsterdam, which will be discussed in more detail in section 5. Apart from being a museum, the Slavery Museum will also function as a knowledge hub. This is why a museum knowledge network is being developed side by side with a physical museum, and the options for digital access to the museum are being examined. The government has reserved a total of €3 million from the slavery past fund for this purpose.

In the next phase of the museum's development, this knowledge function will be further elaborated in a way that enhances the museum's networking role. This entails actively involving institutions from across the Kingdom and internationally that deal with the global history of colonization and slavery.

Health and wellbeing

The government wants to counteract the negative impact of the slavery past in the area of health and wellbeing. An initial inventory among the communities revealed aspects such as the effect on (mental) health. For instance, there may be an intergenerational trauma for which regular health authorities cannot always offer the right support. We are taking these signals seriously. The Ministry of Public Health, Welfare and Sport (hereafter: VWS) therefore intends to develop a number of specific interventions, in consultation with parties in the healthcare and wellbeing domain and descendants of enslaved people, with the aim to counteract the impact of slavery on the health and wellbeing of descendants. The government will invest €1.7 million from the slavery past fund in this project.

Education

We are mindful of the slavery past in the current curriculum review. In detailing the draft attainment targets as part of the curriculum review, proposals are being included where relevant on how to embed racism, discrimination, antisemitism, the colonial past and migration history in the curriculum. The revised draft attainment targets for citizenship and digital literacy were presented on 6 March 2024. These address the themes of discrimination and racism. The draft attainment targets for the other learning areas, including man and society, will be delivered at the end of 2024. These will set out what students need to learn about history, among other things.

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Additionally, a database of resources is being developed to support foundational education, where necessary, in facilitating broader discussions in the classroom about the slavery past. We are working to facilitate classroom discussions about the slavery past by training guest speakers. This will be similar to how we collaborate with the foundation "Na de oorlog" (After the War). With a larger pool of guest speakers, the personal stories of professional speakers will be incorporated into education.

Finally, we will develop a teacher's guide on the slavery past in close collaboration with the educational sector. This guide will pool the knowledge obtained from research and contain practical recommendations, including practical materials such as posters and infographics that teachers can use straight away.

For these measures, the government will make €0.80 million available from the slavery past fund.

		<i>Amounts *</i> <i>€1,000</i>
DEP	Policy reinforcements European Netherlands	
J&V	Free change of name	€14,875.00
BZK	Public communication on anti-discrimination	€1,700.00
SZW	Ongoing promotion of social norm	€3,825.00
SZW	Learning network for 20 municipalities	€1,105.00
OCW	Heritage	€4,530.00
BZK	Multi-year research programme	€1,700.00
OCW	Knowledge Centre	€3,000.00
VWS	Health and wellbeing	€1,700.00
OCW	Education	€800.00
Total		€33,235.00

Table 1: Policy reinforcements in European Netherlands

2.2 Policy reinforcements in the Caribbean region of the Kingdom

Together with descendants and other stakeholders from the Caribbean, we are taking targeted steps to allocate the €33.3 million for policy reinforcements in the Caribbean region of the Kingdom. Below, we will first explain how we will collaborate in the coming period. We will subsequently describe the approach to the policy reinforcements, the recovery agendas.

Structure of follow-up process in Caribbean region of the Kingdom

Early this year, the State Secretary for BZK informed the governments and island executives of Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten about the further allocation of the two amounts of €33.3 million for the policy

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reinforcements and the subsidy scheme. The governments and island executives were asked to nominate three representatives who would continue the discussion with BZK about the form and content of the subsidy scheme for social initiatives and the balanced distribution of the policy reinforcements. These are the chair and the secretary of the local platform or committee in formation, and the civil service representative for the slavery past dossier. In addition, BZK will engage in talks with these representatives about the recovery agendas to be drawn up and the Caribbean representation on the Memorial Committee.

Policy reinforcements

As regards the €33.3 million for measures relating to awareness raising, involvement and impact, the promises made on 19 December 2022 will be taken on board in so-called recovery agendas. These may be regarded as an overarching programme comprising the various desired projects (or desired policy reinforcements) and the envisaged cost substantiation and time frame.

Each (island) country has set up or is setting up a committee or platform that is engaged in the follow-up to the apology. These platforms and committees consist of representatives of the local authorities, social organisations and descendants. Many of these representatives already are or have been involved in increasing awareness.

The point of departure is that these local platforms or committees will give further shape to the recovery agendas together with the local authorities and population, so as to ensure a broad support base. To facilitate the formulation of these agendas, one committee or platform per island will receive a one-off subsidy of €25,000. This is meant to provide organisations with the (financial) scope to work out this subject and hire expertise, but also to organise community engagement, for example. Discussions are being held with the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom as to how the Ministry of BZK could further facilitate the realisation of these agendas. It is expected that the recovery agendas will be submitted before 1 July 2025 and will then be (financially) assessed by BZK.

3. Scheme for social initiatives

As we informed the House in the letter of 15 February 2024, the European Netherlands, the Caribbean region of the Kingdom and Suriname each have €33.3 million to spend on the subsidy scheme for social initiatives.⁷ Based on the dialogue sessions held last autumn, two customised subsidy schemes have been prepared in draft for the European Netherlands and the Caribbean region of the Kingdom. The points of departure are the same for both schemes. The resources must be easily accessible for the intended recipients, with guarantees that they will be spent effectively and lawfully.

The scheme for social initiatives was the subject of an internet consultation from 16 February to 16 March in the European Netherlands, and from 1 March to 1 April in the Caribbean region of the Kingdom. The outcomes of the internet

⁷ Parliamentary Papers 2023-2024, 36284 no. 36.

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consultation and the input from the progress meeting of 31 January 2024 will be taken on board in the further elaboration into a final scheme. A report of the results of the internet consultation will be published on the website of the consultation, and will also be included in the explanatory memorandums to the schemes. The aim is to publish both regulations on July 1, 2024, after which applications can be submitted no later than this autumn.

4. Suriname

The point of departure in Suriname, as in the European Netherlands and the Caribbean region of the Kingdom, is to flesh out the follow-up to the apology in consultation with descendants and other stakeholders. Below we will describe the steps taken in this context since 1 July 2023.

On 1 July 2023, the Minister of Foreign Affairs took part in the Keti Koti celebrations in Paramaribo and, on behalf of the Dutch government, offered an apology on Surinamese soil for the Dutch slavery past. This apology, and the words delivered by His Majesty the King on 1 July 2023, met with approval in Suriname. They are regarded as an important step on the road towards healing and reconciliation.

The Special Envoy for the Slavery Past, appointed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, continued her work in Suriname in collaboration with the Dutch embassy. To date, the Special Envoy has made six trips to Suriname, where she has held discussions with the Coordinator for the Slavery Past appointed by the Surinamese government, former minister Silvano Tjong-Ahin. She has also spoken with a large number of descendants and other stakeholders, including representatives of the native communities and Marron communities in Suriname. Her mandate has been extended for the duration of the Memorial Year.

Based on the outcomes of this broad dialogue, Suriname intends to set up a platform on which a number of representatives of the groups most involved will have a seat. This platform will be installed by the President of Suriname. The platform will enable Suriname and the Netherlands to conduct a targeted dialogue about the allocation of the available resources (the €33.3 million for social initiatives and the €33.3 million for policy reinforcements).

5. Commemoration

Commemoration is a key concern and important. Last autumn's dialogue sessions underlined this again. The discussions with descendants and other stakeholders were not only about the value of commemoration for recognition and connection, but also about different ways of commemorating. Below we will set out how the government is giving follow-up to the results of the dialogue sessions in respect of the Memorial Committee and the progression of the Memorial Year.

5.1 Memorial Committee

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An important conclusion from the dialogue sessions is that there is not one single way of commemorating. This translates into different needs. On the one hand, people need the opportunity to commemorate in accordance with their own history and culture. On the other, people need a form of commemoration that appeals to everyone.

In the coming period, the government will continue the dialogue with the NiNsee and other organisations engaged in commemoration in the Kingdom and Suriname with the aim to set up a Kingdom-wide Memorial Committee. The committee's basic premise will be equivalent representation of the various communities with a transatlantic background in the European Netherlands, the Caribbean region of the Kingdom and Suriname. The aim is to present the assignment to the Committee and its chair before July 1, 2024. The Committee is expected to be operational no later than this autumn.

5.2 Slavery Past Memorial Year

The Slavery Past Memorial Year will end on 1 July 2024 but, as this letter shows, there will be no end to commemorating and the attention for the slavery past will not diminish. We see that the Memorial Year has created a movement, with widespread attention and recognition for the slavery past and dialogues and knowledge building about this past. Now that this movement has started, we are together working on a structural dialogue about our shared history, on knowledge and awareness raising in society, on joint commemoration and on fighting the impact of the slavery past. Following on from our previous letter to the House, we would like to share with you some areas of progress in the implementation of the Memorial Year.

As the House was informed earlier, the Memorial Year involved the creation of two subsidy schemes with the Cultural Participation Fund and the Mondriaan Fund. The schemes amount to €7.2 million in total: €6 million provided by central government and €1.2 million by the Cultural Participation Fund itself. The scheme of the Mondriaan Fund is closed now, but the scheme of the Cultural Participation Fund is still open, with a remaining budget of around €1.6 million. In addition, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) supports several projects in countries with a connection to the Dutch slavery past as part of the Commemoration Year. By now, around 200 projects in total have been supported in the European Netherlands and the Caribbean region of the Kingdom. These projects relate to visual arts, heritage, performing arts and literature, but also podcasts, dialogues, safe space sessions, workshops, commemorative events and celebrations. Attached in Annex 4 is an overview of these initiatives from the Mondriaan Fund and the Cultural Participation Fund.

The Cultural Participation Fund will also appoint scouts to support initiators in both parts of the Kingdom in submitting project applications. In this way, we will ensure that everyone is able to apply for funds, including initiators who have little or no experience with this process. In addition, we will prevent a situation in which particular groups are less likely to receive support under the Memorial Year schemes.

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As part of the Commemoration Year, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) facilitates international knowledge collaboration in the field of the slavery past. OCW provides additional research funding to enable research on the slavery past from various countries. For collaboration with Aruba, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten, €375,000 is available until 2027. Budget is also allocated for Bonaire, Saba, and Sint Eustatius, and efforts are underway to collaborate with Suriname, South Africa, and Indonesia to establish a chair to further facilitate research there. There is ongoing work on the further development of this collaboration.

November saw the launch of the online campaign '*Geschiedenis, van ons allemaal*' ('History, of every one of us'). This campaign focuses on people's personal stories about the slavery past and its impact on the present. The stories are shared on www.OCW-verhalen.nl and the social media channels of the Ministry and the participants.

The NiNsee will arrange the closing ceremony of the Slavery Past Memorial Year. The NiNsee is already responsible for organising the National Slavery Past Commemoration and the Keti Koti Festival. The commemorative events, celebrations and gatherings in Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten will be arranged by organisations on the islands, with a contribution from the NiNsee if there should be a need for this.

6. National Museum of Slavery

Work is underway on a National Museum of Slavery in Amsterdam, on the initiative of Amsterdam residents and the municipal authorities. Central government has been involved in this since 2019 and supports the creation of the museum. The development of the Museum of Slavery will add the underexposed perspective to our collective knowledge about the slavery past and thereby part to our collective memory.

On 15 February 2024, three coordinators presented the museum business plan for the National Museum of Slavery, in the presence of the descendants and stakeholders involved. This plan is enclosed with this letter (see Annex 5).⁸ The plan is based on an extensive participation procedure. The coordinators held meetings throughout the Kingdom and beyond. They started in St. Maarten, St. Eustatius, Saba, Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, and Suriname. They spoke with over 5,000 people, from Zeeland to Groningen and from Amsterdam to Maastricht. They also gained information and inspiration in the United States and

⁸ The full report, including appendices, can be viewed on: <https://www.amsterdam.nl/diversiteit/nationaal-slavernijmuseum/vertel-hele-verhaal/>. The plan entitled *Vertel het hele verhaal* ('Tell the whole story') is based on extensive exploration and participation: <https://www.amsterdam.nl/diversiteit/nationaal-slavernijmuseum/over-ons-met-ons/>.

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Benin. On the 2nd of April, the Council for Culture and the Amsterdam Arts Council jointly issued a recommendation regarding the plan.⁹

The Ministry of OCW has ring-fenced €29 million of its budget for this purpose, out of the funds earmarked for culture under the coalition agreement. The Municipal Executive of Amsterdam has reserved €29 million as well. Before the summer, the Amsterdam Municipal Council will decide on the next step in the development of the museum. The further development of the museum is currently being discussed between the municipal authorities and OCW. The Minister of OCW will update the House about this before the summer.

6.1 Caribbean heritage network

When delivering its apology for the slavery past, the government promised Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten 'a local equivalent of the slavery museum'. In addition, the motions proposed by Jesse Klaver MP (Green Left-PvdA) and Renske Leijten MP (SP) called on the government to strengthen the Caribbean museums and be involved in the conservation and management of heritage of the slavery past, all this in consultation with local parties.¹⁰ The discussions which BZK and OCW held on this point with parties in the Caribbean region of the Kingdom revealed the necessity of long-term reinforcement of the cultural infrastructure. What local heritage institutions and cultural professionals want is not a branch of the national slavery museum, but support for conserving, managing and presenting the heritage themselves. They also stressed the importance of collaboration among the (island) countries and access to the knowledge networks within the Caribbean region and the Kingdom.

The Ministry of OCW and the relevant parties on the islands are therefore working on a proposal for inter-island collaboration in the area of heritage. As a first step, a number of heritage professionals organised work sessions facilitated by OCW from 29 February to 2 March. We have identified a need for inter-island proposals to be developed in a wider context on subjects such as museums, archives, archaeology and intangible heritage. The (island) countries will be able to include the resulting initiatives in the (recovery) agenda or agendas. These initiatives will be funded out of the €33.3 million for policy reinforcements in the Caribbean region of the Kingdom.

7. Introduction of equal treatment legislation in Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba

Until now, application of the equal treatment legislation does not extend to the Caribbean region of the Netherlands. In her letter to the House of 23 January 2023, the then Minister of BZK promised to start the legislative process to declare

⁹ <https://www.raadvoorcultuur.nl/actueel/nieuws/2024/04/02/advies-nationaal-slavernijmuseum>.

¹⁰ Parliamentary Papers 2022–2023, 36 284, no. 13. Parliamentary Papers 2022–2023, 36 284, no. 20.

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the equal treatment legislation applicable to the Caribbean region of the Netherlands.¹¹ Through the proposed Act on Protection against Discrimination on the BES Islands, the equal treatment laws will become applicable in full on Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba (the BES islands). The proposal also provides for the creation of an anti-discrimination agency on the islands for free complaints reporting, assistance and advice in cases of discrimination. Additionally, the Human Rights Institute will be given a decision-making role on the three islands. On March 13th, the Advisory Division of the Council of State issued its advice on the proposed bill, which was published on the 18th of March.¹² During the parliamentary deliberations on the bill, expected to take place in 2024, practical preparations for the facility and the Human Rights Institute will be further developed.

The proposal also provides for the creation of an anti-discrimination agency on the islands for free complaints reporting, assistance and advice in cases of discrimination. The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights will also be given responsibility for ruling on cases on the three islands.

The Advisory Division of the Council of State established its advice on the legislative proposal on March 13th, and this was published on March 18th.¹³ The practical preparations required to establish the legal assistance service and to extend the authority of the Institute will be handled during the parliamentary debate on the proposal for a new law, which is expected to take place during 2024.

Conclusion

In recent months, we have taken important steps and achieved tangible results. We have also found that we still have a long way to go, however. The process aimed at awareness raising, healing and psychological closure in all parts of the Kingdom and Suriname requires lasting efforts on the part of the government. Together with descendants and other stakeholders, we will give shape to these follow-up steps in the coming period.

The State Secretary for Kingdom Relations and Digitalisation,

Alexandra C. van Huffelen

¹¹ Parliamentary Papers II 2022/23, 36 200 IV, J.

¹² <https://www.raadvanstate.nl/adviezen/@140443/w04-23-00344/>.

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The Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations,

Hugo de Jonge

The Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Hanke Bruins Slot

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science,

Robbert Dijkgraaf

The Minister of Social Affairs and Employment,

C.E.G. Gennip

The Minister for Legal Protection,

F.M. Weerwind

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The State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport,

Maarten van Ooijen

The State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science

Fleur Gräper-van Koolwijk