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Date: Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 8:04 PM
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Subject: Letter to The Hague - Expansion of Island Council Saba

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Attachments:
03042026 - Letter to The Hague - Expansion Island Council Saba.pdf

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U ontvangt niet vaak e-mail van 5.1.2.e @gmail.com. Ontdek waarom dit belangrijk is

Dear Mr. 5.1.2.e Dear Mr. 5.1.2.e and Dear Kingdom Relations Committees of the 1st Chamber and 2nd Chamber,

I have been following the developments regarding the expansion of the Island Council and Executive Council and WOLBES change.

Please see attached letter to the State Secretary of BZK about this.

I think it is important to provide you with a different perspective from Saba, next to the one that you have been receiving from the WIPM faction.

Kind regards,

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The Level, Saba
Caribbean Netherlands

March 4th, 2026

To:
The State Secretary of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
The Hague, The Netherlands

Through:
Mr. 5.1.2.e 5.1.2.e – Government Commissioner / Rijksvertegenwoordiger for Bonaire, Statia & Saba
Mr. 5.1.2.e 5.1.2.e – Director of Kingdom Relations

CC:
Members of the Committee for Kingdom Relations – House of Representatives
Members of the Committee for Kingdom Relations – Senate

Subject: Democratic representation and governance capacity on Saba – Support for the expansion of the Island Council and end to democratic deficit.

Dear State Secretary,

Following today's parliamentary debate concerning governance in the Caribbean Netherlands, I noted with appreciation your remarks that the Ministry continues to listen carefully to the views of the Island Councils of Bonaire and Saba regarding the proposed legislative amendment to expand the size of the Island Councils. I, too, would like to respectfully contribute to this discussion from the perspective of a resident of Saba who has actively participated in the democratic process of the island.

During the Island Council elections of 2023, I participated as a candidate and was honored to receive significant support from voters on the island. The experience strengthened my conviction that democratic participation on Saba remains strong and that many residents are willing to contribute to the future governance of our island when opportunities arise. In that context, the proposal to expand the Island Council of Saba from five to seven members represents an important and constructive step toward strengthening democratic representation and administrative capacity on the island and a step away from the democratic deficit that the island finds itself in due to the current set-up.

The governance structure of the Caribbean Netherlands differs substantially from that of municipalities in the European Netherlands. As noted in the explanatory memorandum accompanying the review of the Public Entities Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba Act (WolBES), the public entities carry a relatively broad and complex set of responsibilities, including tasks that in the European Netherlands are typically handled by national, provincial, or water management authorities. This combination of responsibilities and small administrative scale places significant pressure on the limited number of elected representatives responsible for oversight and decision-making. In addition, international research on governance in small island jurisdictions consistently shows that small population size often creates diseconomies of scale in public administration, requiring stronger institutional frameworks and broader participation in decision-making in order to maintain effective governance.

Expanding the Island Council modestly would, therefore, provide several tangible benefits:

1. It would strengthen democratic representation by allowing a broader range of community perspectives to be represented within the council.

2. It would improve governance capacity by distributing the growing portfolios of policy responsibilities among more elected officials.

3. And it would contribute to democratic resilience by encouraging greater civic participation. Experience across democratic systems shows that when representative bodies expand, more citizens become willing to stand for election and participate in public life.

This last point is particularly relevant for Saba. Our island community is small, yet there is considerable civic engagement and a willingness among residents to contribute to the island's future. In recent months, I have spoken with numerous individuals on Saba who have expressed interest in becoming politically active, should the institutional framework allow for broader and fair representation.

In this context, I would also like to share that I intend to establish a new political party on Saba ahead of the next Island Council elections. As party leader, I have already begun discussions with several prospective candidates, who wish to contribute constructively to the island's governance and democratic development. Our goal is to strengthen public participation, while maintaining the collaborative spirit that characterizes governance on Saba. It is important to emphasize that this discussion should not be interpreted as a critique of the current Island Council or Executive Council. The leaders of Saba have worked with dedication and commitment to serve the island community, often under demanding circumstances and with limited institutional capacity. The proposal currently before Parliament should instead be seen as part of the natural evolution of democratic governance in the Caribbean Netherlands.

For a small island community such as Saba, the difference between five and seven council members may appear modest in numerical terms. In democratic practice, however, such a change can significantly improve representation, strengthen oversight, and encourage broader

participation in public life – ultimately improving democracy on Saba. I, therefore, respectfully encourage the Ministry and Parliament to continue supporting the proposed expansion of the Island Council of Saba as an important step toward strengthening democracy, governance capacity, and civic participation on our island.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the governance and democratic development of the Caribbean Netherlands.

Yours sincerely,

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Resident of Saba
Prospective party leader of a newly-to-be-formed party