



Press release

February 17th, 2025

Cft: "Relapse is imminent in Bonaire, restore order in the basics"

Kralendijk – During it's deliberations with Bonaire's Executive Council and Island Council, the Board of financial supervision of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba (Cft) drew attention to the problems that are frequently and repeatedly part of the Cft's findings. Relapse of financial management, budgetary policy and the functioning of the government entities is imminent, due to a lack of executive capacity. Bonaire is simply not in control.

Executive capacity

In all areas, the Cft observes a lack of executive capacity, varying from a lack of decision-making on the part of the island administration to the implementation thereof. This is reflected in a relapse of financial management, deficient implementation of policy as well as the insufficient functioning of government entities.

Financial management

Over the past years, Bonaire has taken important steps to improve its financial management. Regarding 2023, for the second time in a row, Bonaire received a fully unqualified audit opinion regarding its annual accounts. There is, however, a relapse. In the past year, the Cft has expressed criticism in its advices, and it felt the necessity to refrain from issuing an evaluation of the fourth implementation report for 2024, due to the inadequacy of the information provision. This leads to the Island Council being limited in its supervisory function. In light of these findings, the Executive Council invited the Cft to issue more detailed recommendations on the short term, regarding the structuring of financial management.

Implementation of budget 2024 and consequences for 2025

The Cft reiterated its concerns regarding the feasibility of Bonaire's budgetary ambitions, and it observes a worrisome development of unspent resources. In 5 years time, Bonaire's budget has doubled, as have its reserves. The island has difficulty spending resources, and places a large amount of resources in special-purpose reserves, postponing policy ambitions for 2024 to later years.

Government entities

The Cft also drew attention to corporate governance and the management of government entities. Selibon's functioning is an indicator of the urgency to address these issues as soon as possible.

Collection of local taxes

Lastly, the Cft reiterated its objections to Bonaire's intention to take over collection of local taxes from Belastingdienst Caribisch Nederland. This leads to considerable risks to Bonaire's budget. The administrative organization is already under pressure due to the challenges in the areas of the implementation of policy, financial management and government entities. In response, the Executive Council stated that it will leave in any case the counter tasks of the tax authorities with the Belastingdienst Caribisch Nederland. Furthermore, Bonaire will prioritize restoring order in the basic tax administration.

[End of press release]



Picture:

Ton Verkuijlen

Photo caption:

Bonaire is simply not in control.

Note for the editor – not for publication

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