

Slavery Past Programme – Newsletter 3

2 June 2023

FOREWORD

This third newsletter for the Slavery Past Programme has taken some time to appear. In previous newsletters, we indicated that one edition would be released every two weeks, although for the time being, this frequency has been adjusted to once a month.

In the meanwhile, we have been working hard behind the scenes on a number of tasks, such as fleshing out all activities recorded in the cabinet's response. In this newsletter, you can find more information about the current state of affairs and what steps are being taken.

MEETING WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND PROGRESS LETTER

It is vital to us that we keep all parties with direct involvement informed regarding our current state of affairs, and for this purpose, a meeting has been scheduled for mid-June. This session will follow the two earlier meetings in the Catshuis on the 8th and the 13th of December, which were organised during the run-up to the apology on the 19th of December. During the meeting, we will keep previous invitees and closely involved parties up to date with the steps taken following the apology on the 19th of December. We will also look ahead to the follow-up action, including the steps we will take to organise the social initiatives scheme and the Memorial Committee.

After the meeting, this information will also be shared via the progress letter that we will provide to the House of Representatives. The House of Representatives has asked the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations to keep the House updated regarding the state of play. The progress letter will be public and we will bring it to your attention in a subsequent edition of the newsletter.

WORKING TOGETHER TO FILL IN THE GAPS

How will residents of the European Netherlands be involved?

In the [cabinet's response](#) on the 19th of December, the government stated that in the years to come, a variety of activities will be initiated to handle the issue of slavery past. The cabinet wants to use the Memorial Year, which starts on the 1st of July 2023, to talk to parties concerned about how these goals can be achieved.

Currently, a team of lawyers, financial experts and communication experts are working on a plan that clearly shows how the process of organising a social initiatives scheme and a National Memorial Committee will be structured. This will ensure that descendants and other parties involved will know when they can provide input. This plan will be completed by June. We will create visual road maps for this purpose and provide these, together with the progress letter, to all interested parties via this newsletter and other media.

In autumn 2023, meetings will be arranged in different parts of the Netherlands during which descendants, parties involved and a wide cross-section of society will have the opportunity to discuss the activities that the cabinet will implement. More information on this matter will follow at a later date.

The Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations will formulate concrete proposals based on the results of all of the discussions conducted. She will also use these results to formulate points for attention for the House of Representatives.

How will the Caribbean Netherlands be involved?

From the 28th of March until the 1st of April, Director-General of Kingdom Relations Roald Lapperre visited Curaçao, Aruba and Bonaire. During his visit, concrete agreements were made concerning the promises made in the government response dated the 19th of December 2022. He also discussed broader social challenges. These will be incorporated into the island/country memoranda of each island/country together with the fleshed-out promises. In the period to come, these island/country memoranda will be further fleshed out and expanded via discussions with social organisations and other parties involved.

The visit will continue from the 8th -12th of May with visits to St. Maarten, Saba and St. Eustatius. Just like the first visits, these visits will also include discussions with social organisations, working groups (ASCAR) and local authorities. The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations will keep pace with each island's progress in further fleshing out the subjects proposed by the islands/countries. After all, it is vital that each island/country is given the space and opportunity to flesh out these issues in conjunction with broader social issues.

MEMORIAL YEAR LOGO COMPLETE

The logo has been created by the design agency 'Ontwerpwerk'. The key aspects of the logo is that it must be recognisable, unifying and inviting. It must also respect the sensitivity of the theme and appeal to the target groups, including the communities in question and individuals/communities with a link to the slavery past. At the very least, the logo will be translated into the four official languages in the Kingdom of the Netherlands: Dutch, English, Papiamentu and Papiamentu. No anniversary years will be specified (150 or 160) as slavery was abolished at different moments in the various former and current parts of the kingdom.

A range of subissues have been presented to a focus group and tested among a representative cross-section of Dutch citizens (n=1100) by research firm I&O Research. Based on their responses, we selected the results below.



A manual for the use of the pictorial trademark is currently being drawn up and it will be published via Rijksoverheid.nl upon its completion. This will enable everyone responsible for initiatives relating to the Slavery Past Memorial Year to use the logo correctly. All of these 'separate' initiatives will have a cumulative effect that will boost recognisability and connection in relation to the Slavery Past Memorial Year.

Do you need to use the logo for communications already? If so, then send an e-mail to pdr@minocw.nl

WORKING VISITS

[A look back on the visit of Minister Dijkgraaf to Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten:](#)

At the beginning of April, Minister of Education, Culture and Science Robbert Dijkgraaf visited Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten. This was part of his introductory visit to the Caribbean region of the kingdom and followed his visit to Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao in January. During his visit, Minister Dijkgraaf discussed education, science and slavery past with delegations from the islands. A different vision and corresponding needs/wishes were developed on each island, particularly in the area of slavery past.

There is increasing attention to slavery past on the island of Saba and there is a need to make the accumulated knowledge available to a larger audience. On St. Eustatius, there is a desire to discover and safeguard the colonial inheritance -which is omnipresent on the island and in the people's lives- for the generations to come. And on St. Maarten, the focus is on continuing the dialogue that was emphatically initiated at the time of the apology on 19 December.

During the Slavery Past Memorial Year, it is important to Minister Dijkgraaf that we carefully listen to the various needs and sentiments and initiate dialogue in these areas, as well as initiating the next concrete steps.

Working visit by the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

On the 12th of April, the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations visited the National Archive. Here, she viewed various documents relating to slavery past and how it affects the community today, such as the 1954 Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the 2010 amendment to this charter and the 1975 instrument of recognition of Suriname's independence. The dialogue primarily concerned the role that archives play in raising awareness of slavery past. Among other parties, the minister spoke to Director of Archives, Services and Innovation Tom de Smet about collaboration and exchange between the National Archive and other archives in the Caribbean Netherlands and Suriname. In this regard, attention is also being paid to making these archives more easily available for academic research.

Minister Hanke Bruins Slot emphasised the importance of these archives, as among other factors, they allow us to take ownership of our history and to learn from it.

On the 22nd of May, the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations spoke to young people and schoolchildren in Almere. During this conversation, the children and young people exchanged ideas with the minister regarding how slavery past affects their everyday life. For example, students of law said that they continue to discuss the use of the word 'enslaved persons' with their professors and there was wide agreement that educational institutions are the key place for creating greater awareness.

GET IN TOUCH

Recently, we have spoken to a range of organisations and parties involved. If we have not yet spoken to you or if you know someone else who you think should be involved in the process, please do let us know.

Are there any other issues that you would like to be addressed in the newsletter? If so, let us know that too!

You can contact us via: PostbusProgrammaSlavernijverleden@minbzk.nl