

News Items and Public Crime Summary for Week Ending December 25, 2010

Curacao - Dutch Caribbean Securities Exchange: Trade can begin

The Dutch Caribbean Securities Exchange (DCSX) announced they have become operational. According to CEO Luis Santine, the test phase was successful. "The official inauguration of the DCSX will take place in January 2011, but trade can already begin." Banco di Caribe, Amicorp, BNH Financial Services, SFT Bank and the Maduro & Curiel's Bank are affiliated with the platform as brokers. Brokers can now offer their services to both local and international issuers of shares, obligations and other bonds. Santine expects the trade platform to boost the growth of DCSX in the region. "This implies a strengthening of the local financial sector." According to Santine, interest in the DCSX is increasing every day. "Not only local companies express more interest, but also from the Netherlands, the United States, Latin America and we have even received more questions from China on the possibilities of DCSX via the Listing Advisers." Another positive development is that the Central Bank of Curaçao and St. Maarten and the local government are favorably disposed towards the idea of listing government bonds on the DCSX. There are currently several local initiatives to start a „venture capital fund“ and a „real estate fund“. A few concrete listings are expected to submit a request for a listing soon. More information on the DCSX can be found on its website www.dcsx.an (Amigoe).

Curacao - Cruise tourism increase

From interim figures of the Curaçao Tourism Board (CTB) for October, it appears that cruise ship arrivals have increased with 57 per cent compared to the same month last year. Eighteen cruise ships in total had visited Curaçao this month compared to eleven in October last year. The total number of registered passengers in October amounted to 31,801, in comparison with the 20,280 registered cruise tourists last year. For stay-over tourists, all regions show an increase: North America (24 per cent), South America (3 per cent), the Caribbean area (7 per cent) and Europe (22 per cent). On average, stay-over tourists spent 6.83 nights on Curaçao in October. Last year's average was 5.79 (Amigoe).

Bonaire - Only 34 per cent votes in referendum

Out of a total of 9,698 eligible voters, only 3,414 found their way to the polls on Friday in Bonaire's constitutional referendum on the status of special overseas public entity of the Netherlands. Based on the 3,315 valid votes cast, the official turnout was 34.18 per cent, far below the 51 per cent considered the international minimum required to validate the result. With the UPB, as the island's biggest political party which negotiated the new status, having urged its supporters not to participate, the "No" option backed by opposition party DP and UPB's coalition partner independent councilman Anthony Nicolaas won easily with 2,879 votes against and 391 for "Yes." The referendum could have political consequences, because Nicolaas (former UPB member) is unhappy that

UPB agreed to hold the referendum when he broke with DP two months ago to form a new coalition with his old party, only to turn around and boycott the referendum. Nicolaas also said there was no rule a low turnout automatically meant the result must be disregarded. In his opinion, the fact that a significant majority of voters said “No” cannot be ignored. UPB leader Ramonsito Booi said the result proved the majority agreed this was not the time to judge the new status his party had negotiated and it was better to wait for the evaluation after five years that had been agreed on with The Hague (Various newspapers).

Curacao - PM Schotte attends Kingdom Council of Ministers meeting

Prime Minister Gerrit Schotte attended the Kingdom Council of Ministers meeting in The Hague last Friday. He explained the Curaçao government's policies and spoke with the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Uri Rosenthal (VVD) on foreign policy, the relationship of the Kingdom with Venezuela, and the Isla refinery. After his meeting with Rosenthal, Schotte stated that he wants to focus more on economic diplomacy. His goal is to promote Curaçao's economic interests in Latin America and the Caribbean. That fits in well with the foreign policy priorities of minister Rosenthal. Schotte and Rosenthal agreed to explore how to supplement and reinforce each other's ambitions. The Kingdom Council of Ministers consists of the Dutch Council of Ministers together with the Plenipotentiary Ministers of Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten. The Kingdom Council decides on matters concerning the entire Kingdom, such as amendment of the Kingdom Charter, international treaties, and the common interests of the Kingdom (Amigoe).

Curacao - Newspaper articles on missing Vice Consul James Hogan

Vigilante newspaper printed two articles on missing U.S. Vice Consul James Hogan in its December 20 edition. The first article alleged that an unstable marriage and doubts about his ability to take care of his family made Hogan visit prostitutes. *Vigilante* further claims that Hogan orchestrated his own suicide on September 25, 2009. Allegedly, he did so by walking to the Caracasbaai peninsula, cutting his wrists, swimming out to the open sea, losing consciousness and finally drowning. The second article claims that witnesses had seen Hogan in the company of a Dominican prostitute in Curaçao before his disappearance, and that someone had later seen him in the city of Santiago in the Dominican Republic. It also alleged that Hogan had a life insurance policy worth only 83,000 dollars. The same newspaper had published similar uncorroborated articles in October (reported in Daily Antillean and Aruban News of October 6, 2010) (*Vigilante*).

Aruba - Foxy Lady owner remains in custody

Foxy Lady stripclub owner Alex Mathew remains in custody, after his attorney had requested in vain for his release last Friday. Attorney John Zara claimed that the investigation into the alleged human smuggling and other illicit activities of Mathew started in March of 2009, and to date there is no complete summons, while some witnesses have yet to be heard. The Public Prosecutor's Office offered no comment. The investigation started after a tip from the Dutch National Police Services Department (Amigoe).

Curacao - CUC sees no financial risk with take-over

The management of Curaçao Utilities Company (CUC), owner of the Build Own and Operate (BOO) power plant, does not agree with the assertions from the Board of Commissioners of the Refineria di Kòrsou (RdK – owner of the refinery) that upon taking over all shares from CUC, the company would run a \$173 million dollar risk. The RdK board had expressed its concern two weeks ago, in which they had made clear that the current shareholders, Curaçao Energy Company (CEC, the Japanese companies Marubeni and Mitsubishi) and local utility company Aqualectra would be held responsible for overdue maintenance and for not making the necessary investments on time. The CUC management said that RdK's financial risk calculations with regard to overdue maintenance and replacement investments were erroneous and too high. CUC further stated they had always committed themselves to the BOO project, reinvesting dividends received into the project. Total investment with capital from its various shareholders in CUC was \$74 million dollars. Aqualectra has invested \$19 million dollars, CEC \$21 million dollars and RdK \$34 million dollars for which they will receive the preferential shares. A \$130 million dollar loan for the BOO project also exists. The outstanding loan amounts to \$32 million dollars and expires in June 2013 (Amigoe, Antilliaans Dagblad, La Prensa).

Curacao - Fewer robberies, more car thefts

The Curaçao Police Department released some preliminary crime figures for 2010 (January-November). There were a total of 394 robberies, a decrease compared with 2009 when 512 robberies were registered over the same period (551 for Jan-Dec 2009). Some 40 per cent of robbery cases were solved (160 cases) (33 per cent in 2009 – 182 cases). Among the 178 arrests made in connection with robberies (203 in 2009), there were 25 minors and eight women. The number of vehicles reported stolen has increased from 287 in 2009 to 315 in 2010, with 38 cases solved this year, compared to 77 in 2009. Some 199 vehicles were recovered in 2010 (210 in 2009) (Amigoe).

Curacao - BOB law to be sent to Curaçao and St. Maarten Parliaments soon

The Ministers of Justice of Curaçao and St. Maarten are trying to quickly send to their respective Parliaments the draft ordinance regarding the Extraordinary Investigative Authority ("Bijzondere Opsporingsbevoegdheden"), also known as the "BOB law." This was placed on the decision list of the judicial four-party consultation between the Ministers of Justice of Aruba, Curaçao, St. Maarten and the Netherlands held in The Hague recently. The draft BOB law had been on the agenda of the last regular meeting of the Parliament of the former Netherlands Antilles on September 7, but was not discussed as there was no quorum. The Committee on Money Laundering had said that the implementation of the BOB law was required to ratify the United Nations "Treaty of Palermo" against cross-border and organized crime. Doing so would comply with one of the key recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) that was to evaluate the Netherlands Antilles at the end of this year. The BOB law permits the use of monitoring equipment and other special surveillance activities in criminal investigations. It is necessary to combat crossborder crime, such as the financing of terrorism. The BOB law went into effect on October 10 for Bonaire, Saba, and St. Eustatius because these islands had become public entities of the Netherlands (Amigoe, Daily Herald).

CURAÇAO

Crime December 17 – 22

On December 18, a Chinese store in Santa Maria was robbed. On December 20, two masked men held up security guards exiting an armored truck in Saliña. They fled the scene with an undisclosed amount of cash. The same morning, a money courier in Juan Domingo was robbed (Amigoe, Extra, Antilliaans Dagblad).

ARUBA

Crime December 17 – 22

On December 17, a delivery truck driver in Pos Chikito was robbed. On December 20, the manager of a business in Paradera was robbed by three men when he attempted to make a deposit of his store's daily proceeds (Diario Aruba, Amigoe).

ST. MAARTEN

Crime December 17 – 22

On December 21, a home owner in Cay Bay was shot and injured. The motive for the shooting was not known (Daily Herald, St. Maarten Island Time).

"The Weekly Press Summary is a compilation of stories running in the Dutch Caribbean press that is intended to alert readers about items of interest to them. There is no interpretation or verification of the facts contained therein."