



# Newsletter

# Telecommunication and Post

## Dutch Caribbean

Dear reader,

This is the second Newsletter of the year 2014, through which the Radio Communications Agency and the Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM) provide the people of the Dutch Caribbean and the parties in the telecommunications and postal market with up-to-date information on the facts, events and developments specific to the sector.

### **4G on the BES islands**

The importance of telecommunication in daily life is continuously on the rise. Not only for business purposes, but also in a private capacity, there is a possibility to communicate at any location and being available and online has become very commonplace. One of the characteristics of this development is the growing need to exchange increasingly larger flows of information in short spaces of time, like in video conversations or watching a movie.

There is increased growth, not only in communication through fixed lines, but also through mobile devices. Particularly the technical capabilities that make mobile communication faster are on a fast track internationally.

Across the world, mobile telecommunication networks are adapted to new international standards like GSM, 3G/HSPA+, LTE and LTE-Advanced. The latest technologies LTE (Long Term Evolution) and LTE-Advanced, also known as 4G, are fit to transfer large flows of information. This increases the need for a frequency spectrum which will enable this.

In anticipation of this development and to make this possible on the BES islands as well, as a first step the Agency Telecom has assigned a frequency spectrum for the realization of broadband mobile telecommunication networks. After coordination with the Bureau Telecommunication and Post on Curaçao, the 1800MHz-band was assigned for LTE in Bonaire.

For assigning and using the 1800 MHz band in Saba and Sint Eustatius, the coordination with the supervisors in the surrounding islands is yet to take place. This coordination is necessary in order to minimize interference of mobile telecommunication networks in surrounding islands and to guarantee the use in Saba and Sint Eustatius.



Agency Telecom closely monitors international developments in order to free up spectrum in time and appropriate this for broadband mobile networks.

### **Safety at sea**

The safety at sea is acknowledged by everyone. In order to guarantee the safety of everyone and to minimize the risks during disasters and to maximize the chances of successful provision of emergency services, discipline will be required from all seafarers

An important aspect here is that the radio communication equipment for that purpose is present. This equipment must operate free from disturbances on the frequencies intended for that purpose and the operator of this equipment must be able to operate the equipment in the proper manner. This is important, because lives may be at stake.

It is important to be aware that authorization is required for being in possession of this radio communication equipment, that the equipment is approved and that the operator holds a certificate to prove authorization for operating the equipment.

Owners of pleasure craft, for example, in the possession of transmission equipment for maritime radio communication, for which no authorization has been granted yet, must apply for this at Agency Telecom. After authorization is granted, the radio communication equipment must also be approved by the agency, after which a certificate of approval will be issued. A copy of the authorization and of the certificate of approval must be kept with the radio communication equipment, as it may be required to present these upon inspection by the agency or the coast guard. Agency Telecom performs multiple checks and inspections every year, at the ports other berths on all BES islands.

In order to obtain a certificate for the operation of radio transmission systems in the shipping industry, it is required to pass a radio exam. Information about this can be found later in this newsletter. The operator of radio communication equipment must be able to present his certificate during inspections by the agency.

### **Mutual recognition of maritime certificates**

In 2011, the supervisors of the Dutch Caribbean, Aruba, Sint Maarten and Curaçao in the field of telecommunications discussed the possibility of more collaboration between these authorities, among other things where the recognition of maritime certificates is concerned. At the moment, legislation for the different countries and the BES islands within the Kingdom shows differences in this respect. This is why there are no provisions for the recognition of each other's maritime certificates.

Following from this, among others the Coast Guard of the Dutch Caribbean, the Ministry of Defense and the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate made inquiries from the Minister about the possibility of recognition of maritime operational certificates.

In response to this, Agency Telecom has stated that based on the current legislation, recognition is not possible for the BES islands, but exemption from taking the exam may be applied for. Subsequently, this exemption will make it possible for the BES islands to apply for a maritime operational certificate.

Both Agency Telecom and the Bureau Telecommunication & Post (BT&P) feel this is not a desirable situation.

Agency Telecom is involved in consultations with the various countries within the Kingdom to arrange for the recognition of certificates for all countries and territories of the Kingdom and to lay this down (have it laid down). The amendment of rules and regulations is time-consuming and is not only restricted to the BES islands.

### **Postal services on the BES islands**

On 17 October 2013, the Ministry of Economic Affairs granted Flamingo Communications N.V. concession to provide postal services on the BES islands under the name of Flamingo Express Dutch Caribbean. On 2 January 2014, Flamingo Express started to provide postal services on the BES islands.

The ACM supervises compliance with postal legislation on the BES islands. In that framework, ACM regularly has consultations with Flamingo Express in order to establish

that the postal services are in compliance with the conditions as set out in the law and in the concession.

Part of this supervision by ACM consists of measuring the duration of the transfer of letters that are presented locally and are to be delivered locally. If the findings give cause thereto, Flamingo Express will be confronted to take the necessary actions.

Flamingo Express is busy refurbishing its points for presenting letters, the so-called letterboxes and to provide same with information about the times when the mail will be collected.

Flamingo Express is also working on an evaluation of its General Terms and Conditions for postal services and to properly make these known to its clients in order for clients to be aware of their rights and obligations.

As per 1 October 2014, Flamingo Express introduced its regular postal stamps for sending letters on the BES islands and abroad. Before long, also special theme postal stamps will be issued.

#### **Radio exams**

The radio exams to obtain a certificate to operate radio transmission systems in the shipping industry are conducted twice a year. The first following radio exams will be conducted in the period November-December 2014 and in the period May-June 2015.

Those interested in taking the radio exams may register for this at the office of the Bureau Telecommunication and Post in Bonaire. The registration form may also be applied for there.

The exact dates for the first following exams will be announced in local newspapers. Persons who have already registered will be directly informed of the date.

#### **Wish to contact us?**

Requests, questions, complaints, recommendations and all other correspondence may be directed to the office address of the Bureau Telecommunication and Post in Bonaire or by e-mail to [bonaire@burtel.cw](mailto:bonaire@burtel.cw) addressed to:

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