



King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands (second from left) was the special guest at the world premiere of *Double Play*, a movie based on the novel of Curaçao writer Frank Martinus Arion, at Old Luxor Theatre in Rotterdam on Friday evening as part of the International Film Festival Rotterdam. Producers Gregory Elias from Curaçao (second from right) and Lisa Cortes from the United States (right) were on the committee that welcomed the King. *Double Play*, directed by US director Ernest Dickerson, was filmed entirely in Curaçao. The cast and crew were present at the premiere, which was completely sold out with some 800 people in attendance, many of Dutch Caribbean descent. (Suzanne Koelgea photo)

## Blok new Justice Minister, Plasterk takes over housing

THE HAGUE--Dutch Minister of Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations Ronald Plasterk has taken over the portfolio Housing and Government Service of colleague Minister Stef Blok, who is now in charge of Security and Justice with the resignation of Ard van der Steur on Thursday.

The Dutch Government Information Service announced the new division of portfolios on Friday. Blok of the liberal democratic VVD party on Friday became the new Minister of Security and Justice and succeeded Van der Steur (VVD).

Blok's appointment was already anticipated on Thursday when Van der Steur stepped down following a tough debate in

the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament. Blok was Minister of Housing and Government Service since November 2012.

Blok temporarily took over the Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations portfolio over the summer due to an urgent open heart surgery of Minister Plasterk of the Labour Party PvdA. The portfolio Housing and Government Service reverts under the Ministry of Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations BZK.

Blok was already in charge of Security and Justice in 2015 after Minister Ivo Opstelten stepped down as a result of the same issue, the deal with drugs dealer Cees H., which has now resulted in the resignation of Van der Steur.

King Willem-Alexander has conceded the resignation of Van der Steur on the recommendation of Prime Minister Mark Rutte, it was stated in a government press release. The King thanked Van der Steur for the many distinguished services that he has rendered to the King and the Dutch Kingdom.

As is constitutionally customary when the Minister steps down, State Secretary of Security and Justice Klaas Dijkhoff subsequently made his position available to the King on Thursday night. However, the King has not allowed this resignation, and therefore Dijkhoff will stay on as State Secretary.

## Netherlands not to join EU Fraud Prosecutor's Office

THE HAGUE--The Netherlands is opting out of plans to develop a European Prosecutors Office to focus on fraud involving European Union (EU) subsidies.

A majority in the Dutch Parliament is not in favour of "more Europe" during the campaign for the Dutch Parliament's Second Chamber election of March 15, the *Volkscrant* newspaper reported on Friday.

The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) would be able to launch criminal probes and prosecute individuals charged with fraud and criminal misapplication of EU money.

While the Dutch cabinet does support the setting up of a new anti-fraud authority, conservative VVD, Christian-Democrat CDA, Socialist Party (SP) and representative of minor

parties consider it would be a "direct attack" on the sovereignty of nation states and a further transfer of power to the EU headquarters, the paper said.

The plan to set up the pan-European body was launched in 2013. Just before his resignation as Minister of Security and Justice Ard van der Steur, on Thursday, warned Members of the Dutch Parliament's Second Chamber that opting out would not allow the Netherlands to ignore the new anti-fraud organisation. In addition, if the Netherlands wants to investigate cross-border fraud it would have to do this with the EPPO, he said.

Supporters of the EPPO say every year at least 50 billion euros in Value Added Tax (VAT) is lost due to cross-border crimes and argue that the EPPO would take EU's fight against crime to a new level, beyond mere cooperation.

Sweden has also opted out of the EPPO setup, the *Volkscrant* stated.



Secretary-General of UP board Kenneth Serrant and treasurer Earl Wyatt (right) submit the party donation register to a representative of the Electoral Council.

## UP party submits register of donations to electoral council

PHILIPSBURG--The United People's (UP) Party on Wednesday submitted its Register of Donations to the Electoral Council.

Treasurer of the UP Party Board Earl Wyatt and Secretary General Kenneth Serrant submitted the register.

In accordance with the National Ordinance on Registration and Finances of Political Parties, political parties are required to submit to the Electoral Council a chronological register of donations of all donations received throughout the year 2016, be it in cash,

by check or in kind, no later than January 31.

All political parties are requested to complete their register of donations via an online database that the Electoral Council established for this purpose, UP said in a press release issued on Thursday.

## LIAT passenger dies at airport

AIRPORT--LIAT airline confirmed that a man travelling on one of its flights passed away at Princess Juliana International Airport SXM on Wednesday.

The passenger, who was in transit from an international carrier onto LIAT, boarded the aircraft accompanied by a medical professional. Prior to take-off, the passenger was reported to be in distress and the aircraft returned to the gate.

Paramedics were immediately called to assist. Notwithstanding the efforts of the medical professionals, the passenger subsequently died.

The passengers on the flight continued their journey a little over an hour after the aircraft returned to the gate.

LIAT's management and staff expressed their deepest condolences to the family and friends of the deceased passenger.

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