



Gemeenschappelijk  
**Hof van Justitie**



# THE COURT IN TRANSITION

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The Joint Court of Justice of Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten and of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba is directly or via its judges affiliated to:

Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers

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UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  
Global Judicial Integrity Network

[www.unodc.org/ji](http://www.unodc.org/ji)



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[www.echr.coe.int](http://www.echr.coe.int)



EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

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## Reading Guide



The Joint Court of Justice (Court) Board prepares this annual report pursuant to Article 48, paragraph 3 of the Kingdom Act on the Joint Court of Justice (*Rijkswet Gemeenschappelijk Hof van Justitie*) for the benefit of the four countries served by the Court. The annual report is presented to the Ministers of Justice of these four countries. We offer you the opportunity to quickly and easily navigate through the annual report by using tabs at the top of the pages to search for topics you wish to read or save.

This annual report is centered around the theme “The Joint Court of Justice in Transition.”

# Preface by the Management Board

The Joint Court of Justice plays a central role in the administration of justice and in safeguarding the rule of law within the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. This task requires independent, impartial, and high-quality adjudication, supported by an efficiently structured organization and sound management.

The year 2025 can be characterized as a transitional year. During this reporting year, previously made strategic choices were further specified and initial steps were taken towards their implementation. In consultation between the Board of Directors and the Management Board, the multi-year plan for the period 2025–2028 was adopted, setting out the strategic course for the coming years and providing the framework within which the further development and positioning of the Court will take place.

In the year under review, work began on implementing a comprehensive organizational plan for the Court. This plan addresses the primary judicial process, operational management, and the other judicial tasks entrusted to the Court, including special panels and supervisory duties. For the medium term, five strategic objectives have been formulated in the areas of strategy and organization, people, processes and technology, quality and control, and facilities and procurement. These objectives have been elaborated into a multi-year “roadmap” with related projects and measures.

The Management Board emphasizes that a professionally structured, robust, and transparent operational framework is an essential prerequisite for the effective functioning of the Court. In 2025, particular focus was therefore placed on strengthening the financial function, internal control and governance, IT infrastructure, and HR policy. These processes will take multiple years to complete and require sustained attention from both management and oversight bodies

During the year under review, a change occurred in the administrative composition of the Court. The President of the joint Court of Justice, mr. Mauritsz de Kort, stepped down from his position following his appointment as Governor of Curaçao. Under his presidency, work was carried out on the further strengthening and professionalization of the Court, within the applicable legal and administrative frameworks. The appointment of his successor is expected to take place in the spring of 2026. The Management Board considers it important that a president be appointed who will continue the ongoing process of strengthening and professionalizing the Court.

The Management Board would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation for the commitment of the Court’s staff, who have continued to carry out their duties in 2025 during a period of organizational change. Attention to integrity, organizational development, and employee well-being remains a key focus.

The Court’s annual report and financial statements have been adopted in a timely manner in accordance with legal requirements and have been issued with a qualified auditor’s report. The 2025 financial statements close with a virtually neutral result of Cg -13,000, which, in accordance with legal requirements, is charged to the Court’s general reserve.

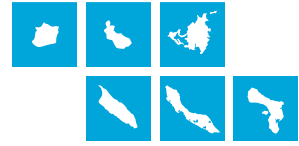
The Joint Court of Justice of Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten and of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba Management Board

Rauf R. Engels  
Member representing Curaçao and Chairman

Elmar Jonasse  
Member representing the Netherlands and Vice-Chairman

Luzina de Greef  
Member representing Aruba

Kelvin Bloyden  
Member representing Sint-Maarten



## Introduction

For the Joint Court of Justice, the year 2025 was marked by change, strengthening, and further professionalization. Across all locations—Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, and Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba—efforts were made to improve the quality of judicial decision-making, modernize processes, and strengthen the organization as a whole. As emphasized in the report, this year was a transitional year in which strategic choices made in previous years took concrete shape and the implementation of the 2025–2028 multi-year plan visibly began.

Developments within the Court ranged from process optimization to digitalization. Efforts were made to increase the accessibility of the administration of justice, including by facilitating digital access to cassation proceedings and further improving publication processes. Investments were also made in personnel, IT infrastructure, and integrity. The organization also faced a major administrative change due to the (premature) departure of President Mauritsz de Kort, who was appointed Governor of Curaçao. The aforementioned developments were initiated under his presidency, and his involvement in them will be missed.

At the same time, the Court is firmly focused on the future. The coming years will be dedicated to building on our progress: deepening the improvement initiatives already underway and establishing a modern, future-proof judicial system. The strategic objectives for the period 2025–2028 serve as the compass for this. Through coordinated projects in the areas of quality (of the judicial system), digitalization, HR development, and operational management, the Court is working step by step toward an organization that is agile, transparent, and sustainably structured.

This annual report provides an overview of the most important developments, results, and challenges of 2025. It demonstrates how the Court continues to adapt to social, technological, and organizational changes, with the aim of ensuring a modern, ethical, and future-proof judicial system for all residents of the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. We will continue to build on this in the years ahead.

### The Board

1

# Meet the Board of Directors, the Management Board, and the Staff Council

## 1.1 The Board of Directors

In 2025, the Board of Directors consisted of the following members: Mauritsz de Kort, President of the Board of Directors through November 3, 2025; Maroeska Scholte, Vice President for the Curaçao and Bonaire branches and Acting President as of November 4, 2025; Jane Jansen, Vice President for the Aruba branch (since February 1, 2025); Joost Veerman, Vice President for the Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius, and Saba branches (since June 1, 2025); and Martin Luttge, Director of Operations.

Mr. De Kort stepped down from his position as president in November 2025 due to his appointment as Governor of Curaçao. The new president of the Joint Court of Justice will be appointed in 2026.

The Board is supported by the Board Secretary, Kyra de Koeijer.



**Mauritsz de Kort**  
*President of the Joint Court of Justice, through November 3, 2025*



**Maroeska Scholte**  
*Vice President of Curaçao and Bonaire and Acting President as of November 4, 2025*



**Jane Jansen**  
*Vice President of Aruba*



**Joost Veerman**  
*Vice President of Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius, and Saba*



**Martin Luttge**  
*Director of Operations*



**Kyra de Koeijer**  
*Board Secretary*

## 1.2 The Management Board

The duties and responsibilities of the Management Board, as the Court's internal supervisory body, are set forth in the Kingdom Act on the Joint Court of Justice (*Rijkswet van het Hof*) and include:



### Supervision of operational management

The Management Board reviews, among other things, the Court's annual plan, budget, interim reports, financial statements, and annual report; it adopts these documents and oversees their implementation.



### Formal employer of court officials

This includes the appointment and dismissal of court officials and external clerks, as well as the approval of policies and changes to the organizational structure.



### Liaison between the Court and the Ministers of Justice of the four Countries

This role is described as follows in the Explanatory Memorandum to the National Act: In theory, consultations between the Court and the Ministers on administrative matters could lead to improper interference in the administration of justice. Therefore, it is desirable to establish a body without judicial functions that can serve as a liaison between the Court and the Ministers. In addition to this more fundamental argument, there is also a practical argument for establishing a body that mediates between the judiciary and the administration. It is not efficient for the Court to negotiate with four Ministers of Justice regarding the necessary size of the support staff and the number of judges.



### Budget and Funding of the Court

The Management Board consults and negotiates with the ministers of the four countries regarding the administration of the judiciary and the manner in which the budget is implemented.

### Composition and Members of the Management Board

The Management Board consists of four members, each representing one of the territories for which the Court has jurisdiction: Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, and the Netherlands (on behalf of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba). The Ministers of Justice submit a proposal for appointment. Appointments are made by royal decree for a term of five years. Reappointment is possible. In the composition of the Management Board, efforts are made to ensure diversity and complementarity. This means that the members effectively complement one another in terms of experience, knowledge, and skills.

In 2025, the composition of the Governing Board was as follows.

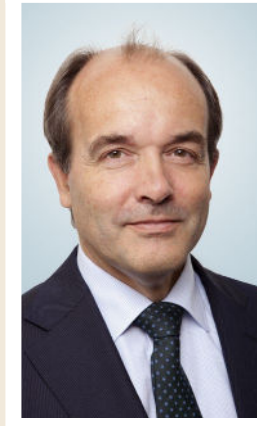
### Kelvin Bloyden Member representing Sint Maarten

Member since February 2011. Until the end of 2022, he served as Deputy Director of a major financial institution in Sint Maarten. He also has extensive experience as a board member and supervisor across various organizations. Kelvin also served as Vice-Chair of the Management Board until 15 September 2025.



### Elmar Jonasse Member representing the Netherlands (on behalf of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba)

Member since October 2024. He is the non-judicial board member of the Gelderland District Court. He previously held a similar position from 2009 at the Zwolle-Lelystad District Court and later at the Midden-Nederland District Court. Prior to that, Elmar served as a manager at a law firm and an IT company, among other roles.



### Rauf R. Engels Member representing Curaçao, also Chairman

Member since December 2022. He has extensive experience as a legal professional. In addition, Rauf has held various executive positions and has successfully overseen major business integrations, as well as change and improvement processes. As of 15 September 2025, he was appointed Chair of the Management Board.



### Luzina de Greef-Mattemaker Member representing Aruba

Member since June 2021 and Chair from 1 July 2023 to 15 September 2025. She is a partner at a tax advisory firm in Aruba and has extensive experience as a tax lawyer and tax advisor. In addition, Luzina has broad experience in governance.



### Caroline Thodé Secretary

She has been working at the Court since 2011, initially as Secretary to the Board of Directors and, since 1 April 2022, as Secretary to the Management Board.

## 1.3 The Staff Council

In addition to the Management Board and the Board of Directors, the Staff Council is also part of the Court's organizational structure. In order to promote a professional organization within the Court and to ensure efficient consensus-based decision-making, the Management Board and the Board of Directors have established a staff participation body: the Staff Council. The Management Board and the Board of Directors grant the Staff Council rights of initiative, information, consultation, and advice.

### Composition of the Staff Council

In 2025, the composition of the Staff Council changed. First, Willem Bel, the previous Chair, returned to the Netherlands in June 2025. He was a member of the Staff Council representing the judges' electoral group. Eline Groenendaal, a judge at the Bonaire location, volunteered to take over his role and has since assumed the position of Chair of the Staff Council.

Furthermore, Lisandra Figaroa, a member representing the Bonaire location, stepped down from the Staff Council after many years of service. Her position has not yet been filled.

Nikisha Rogers from the Sint Maarten location joined the Staff Council in 2025, after Sint Maarten had been without representation for quite some time.

The other members are Gerardine Rozendal and Yolanda Chakoetoe (Curaçao), and Michelline Kelly and Michelangelo Boekhoudt (Aruba).

Finally, Vianka Romney, also from the Sint Maarten location, has been appointed as the new administrative secretary.

## Topics addressed in 2025

### *Elaboration of HRM management plans*

In 2025, the Board updated the HR management plans and, among other things, introduced a new performance evaluation system. The Board continuously informed the Staff Council about the developments, and where necessary, the Staff Council raised questions or provided comments.

### *Progress on the restructuring of the primary process*

A pilot project regarding the restructuring began at the Aruba location in 2025. This involves shifting from a structure consisting of a team of judges, a legal support team, and an administrative support team to teams organized by area of law. These teams consist of judges and colleagues from legal and administrative support who are jointly responsible for the work within a legal area. In this context, the role of “administrative support coordinator” has been introduced. Prior to this, this branch raised a number of important points of concern: current staffing levels must be adequate, managerial tasks assigned to the team clerk must not come at the expense of the primary process, the role of the team clerk must be properly valued, and a return guarantee must be provided for those placed in temporary positions. The Staff Council has closely monitored the experiences with the pilot and will continue to do so in 2026.

Changes have been made and are currently underway at the other locations as part of the transition, and the Staff Council has closely monitored these developments as well.

### *Career policy for administrative support staff*

The Board prepared a draft Career Policy for Administrative Support (see section 2.3, under Retention and Development of Staff), *Behouden en ontwikkelen van personeel*, and requested advice from the Staff Council. The Staff Council decided to issue a preliminary recommendation to the Board of Directors on 30 July 2025. In doing so, the Staff Council raised a number of critical questions regarding the proposed policy and provided a number of comments. Since then, the Staff Council and the Board of Directors have discussed the matter in multiple meetings.

### *Advisory role in the appointment of the Court’s President*

The Staff Council plays an advisory role in filling this vacancy. Based on the Regulations governing the recommendation procedure for the President, Vice Presidents, and Director of Operations 2021, as amended in 2022, the Staff Council advises the SAC President (Selection Advisory Committee). In order to do this effectively, the Staff Council has surveyed staff members regarding their preferences for the new President.

In collaboration with the SAC, an anonymous survey was conducted among the Court’s staff to gain insight into the characteristics and leadership qualities they would like to see in the new president. In addition, the PR department organized meetings for staff members in Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten, a so-called “mini roadshow.” Furthermore, staff were asked what specific questions the PR could pose to the candidates during the interviews.

On November 18, 2025, the PR subsequently conducted interviews with the presidential candidates.

Based on the interviews and all the input the PR gathered from the staff, the PR drafted a recommendation to the SAC. This recommendation was sent to the SAC on December 1, 2025. The SAC incorporated the PR’s recommendation into its overall recommendation to the members of the Court Assembly.

### *Upcoming 2026 elections*

Following an active period of the Staff Council, elections will be held in March 2026 for the continuation of the Staff Council. At the beginning of 2026, a call will be issued within the organization inviting interested candidates to register for the elections.



# 2

## Developments at the Court

### 2.1 Digitalization and process optimization

The Joint Court of Justice continues to pursue solutions aimed at further improving the accessibility, efficiency, and quality of judicial proceedings. To this end, a number of innovations were implemented in 2025.

#### Digital litigation in cassation cases

As of December 1, 2025, parties to proceedings in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom will be able to conduct proceedings digitally before the Supreme Court of the Netherlands. This development marks an important step toward legal equality for all citizens in the Kingdom. The digital authentication tool, which provides access to the Supreme Court’s web portal, can only be requested through the Court of Appeal.

With the introduction of this digital access, a de facto legal inequality between parties in the Netherlands and parties in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom has been eliminated. All parties to proceedings now have the same opportunities to use the cassation portal. This result is the culmination of a process involving several years of intensive collaboration with the Supreme Court.

#### Who has access?

- In criminal cases: only lawyers and designated members of the Public Prosecution Service. Suspects do not have access.
- In tax cases: individuals representing themselves may opt for digital access. For legal entities, government organizations, and professional representatives (such as lawyers and tax advisors), digital access is mandatory.

#### Role of the Court

The Court plays an important role in this new way of working. Front office staff assist parties in applying for the login credentials. If a party does not have a Dutch authentication tool, the front office submits a request to the Supreme Court. Once approved, the participant receives an activation code by email, after which the account is linked to the correct case file.

#### Impact and future outlook

This innovation strengthens the digital infrastructure of the judiciary and promotes a uniform approach throughout the Kingdom.

### Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy and Code of Conduct

During the annual Knowledge Week (see section 2.7) in the spring of 2025, two workshops on “AI and the Judiciary” were held. There were three main topics: a general introduction to AI, the use of AI by parties to litigation, and the use of AI by the judiciary itself.

Following this session, a working group drafted a policy and code of conduct regarding the use of AI. The draft policy and code of conduct set forth how Court staff should handle AI. Both are based on ethical and legal principles, not on rules. The reason for this is that rules can quickly become obsolete due to the rapid development of technology. The key principles included are, among others, the rule of law, independence and impartiality, judicial autonomy, non-discrimination, and transparency and explainability. The draft policy and the draft code of conduct have been submitted to the board for further consideration.

### GEAR portal

In early 2025, a pilot program was launched for the digital exchange of certain administrative law cases from the Curaçao branch and all administrative law cases from the Bonaire branch. GEAR is the Court’s case management system. This method of exchanging case-related documents online is already in use for all tax cases. The first “digital” hearings took place in May. The technology and procedures were evaluated and adjusted where necessary. At the end of 2025, it was decided to extend the pilot by several months to ensure that the modified processes resulting from the use of the portal are properly embedded for both the parties to the proceedings and the Court.

### Publication portal

In collaboration with the internal quality committee, work was done on a module to support the publication of judgments on [www.rechtspraak.nl](http://www.rechtspraak.nl). The Court’s board has expressed its ambition to increase the number of published judgments. To simplify the publication process, all steps of the publication process have been automated within the GEAR system.

## 2.2 Quality of the Judiciary

The 2023 and 2024 annual reports describe the developments that have taken place since the 2021 quality conference. A quality committee is active within the Court, working on these developments. This committee consists of judges representing all branches, all areas of law, and both the trial court and appellate court levels. The Court considers it important that the Quality Committee be given a permanent place within the organization. In 2025, the Board and the Quality Committee discussed the integration of the Quality Committee into the organization.

Furthermore, the Quality Committee continued working on implementing two quality improvements that were also mentioned in previous annual reports. One of these quality improvements is that the Court provides an interpreter at every hearing, so that everyone can express themselves during the hearing in one of the national languages: English, Dutch, or Papiamentu/Papiamentu. In 2025, a successful pilot was conducted at the Curaçao location, and it was decided to permanently implement this procedure. At the end of 2025, the Quality Committee began implementing this procedure at the other locations.

The other quality improvement initiative on which the Quality Committee has continued to work is the aforementioned Publication Process. The Quality Committee has reviewed the guidelines regarding which rulings are published and the internal process for deciding which rulings to publish. In early 2025, this internal process and the possibilities for digital support were discussed within the teams at all locations. Based on input from the teams, the details were further developed in collaboration with the Digitization and Process Optimization team.

## 2.3 Human Resources (HR)

This year was focused on further strengthening the HR function within the Court. In light of the tight labor market, the Court developed and optimized policies and processes related to recruitment, onboarding, retention, and career advancement, with the central objective of attracting, retaining, and developing talent and strengthening the Court’s position as an attractive employer.

### Recruiting staff

The recruitment and selection policy was further refined this year to better reach talent and position the Court as a modern, attractive employer. Job postings have been modernized, and the Court is making a structural commitment to digital channels and social media. A key milestone is the launch of the “Working at the Court” portal on the revamped website <https://ghvj.org>. Its new features will be rolled out starting in 2026.

Last year, the Court once again participated in the National Career Fair in the Netherlands and was also present at the FRED Expo, an event aimed at recent graduates and professionals with a Caribbean background. This year, the Summer Courts were again organized in Aruba and Curaçao, allowing students to learn about the Court’s work and potential future career opportunities. Several interns and student workers gained practical experience at the Court in 2025. These activities support our commitment to recruiting (local) talent in the short and medium term.

### Staff onboarding

In addition to recruiting new staff, ensuring a smooth onboarding process and a strong start for new employees is a top priority. Over the past year, HR procedures related to primary and secondary employment conditions have been further streamlined, clarified, and simplified where possible. The Court expects to see the effects of these changes in the coming year as well. In the coming year, the Court will continue to work on policies and procedures to optimize and digitally facilitate the onboarding of new employees.

### Retaining and development of staff

Retaining employees and supporting their professional development are high priorities. The updated policy for the performance review cycle was adopted in 2025; this cycle supports structured development and performance review meetings. The plan is to roll out the performance review cycle as a pilot in 2026.

Over the past year, there has also been a structural investment in training and development, including through the annual Knowledge Week (see section 2.7). In addition, the Court has offered study opportunities to various employees and continues to focus on development opportunities within the workplace. For example, possibilities have been explored to facilitate career advancement from administrative to legal support roles. In doing so, HR not only develops policies for professional development within its own department but also investigates opportunities for broader career advancement within the organization.

The RAIO/RIO training positions were opened and filled in 2025; they will be opened again in 2026. The Court is continuously working on training plans to further strengthen the expertise and competencies of its staff.

As part of efforts to further improve service delivery and professionalization, Administrative Support staff and coordinators in Aruba participated in targeted training programs. These sessions focused on vision, energy, and passion in the workplace, with an emphasis on motivation, customer focus, and teamwork, and were supplemented by a management course for Administrative Support coordinators. This course centered on themes such as leadership, communication, discipline, and coaching, while also providing concrete tools for effective management.

In addition to training, the Court offered several employees the opportunity to participate in an exchange program in the Netherlands to gain experience there. Administrative Support staff also temporarily supported colleagues at other locations, thereby facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences. Finally, work has begun on developing a training framework for general competencies, such as coordinating,

organizing, leading, and conducting effective conversations, which will be offered to employees in the coming year.

The Court considers it important to support employees' professional development, even if this takes place outside our organization. In 2025, a policy was developed to allow employees to gain experience at other organizations on a temporary basis (in the form of secondment). In this way, the Court is fulfilling its desire to be an attractive employer that supports the development of employees, both within and, where appropriate, outside the organization.

### Employee well-being

Employee well-being remains a top priority. Absenteeism due to illness is closely monitored, and managers are actively encouraged to conduct absenteeism interviews and to help identify suitable work assignments and reintegration strategies. By 2025, the Social Medical Consultation will be implemented more extensively; by 2026, it will become a structural, periodic feature at all locations. Additionally, "Health Week" will soon be organized again, starting in Aruba and focused on promoting the health and well-being of our employees.

### Further strengthening employee engagement

The Staff Council plays an increasingly significant and constructive role in advising and contributing ideas on a number of HR topics. In 2025, collaboration was intensified, and in 2026, the Staff Council will be actively involved in topics such as the performance review cycle. By further shaping this collaboration in the coming year, the Staff Council can actively contribute ideas on initiatives that foster a pleasant and professional work environment, thereby strengthening the quality of the Court's HR policy.

### Further development of the HR Function

Over the past year, efforts have focused on strengthening the HR function within the Court. The emphasis was on streamlining HR processes and ensuring a transparent and consistent application of HR policies and procedures. In doing so, investments were made in collaboration within the HR team and in the HR services provided to the Board, managers, and employees. The Court will continue along these lines in the coming year, with additional focus on optimizing the personnel and payroll administration system and the ongoing development and strengthening of HR policy.

## 2.4 Developments in information technology

Rapid developments in the field of IT require ongoing efforts to modernize and strengthen our IT infrastructure. During the year, it became apparent that the IT environment was vulnerable and no longer met the requirements of modern, flexible, and secure digital collaboration. With the support of an external expert, a thorough analysis was conducted, and the “Modern Workplace” project was launched. The central objectives are to improve collaboration, enhance security, and ensure operational continuity. The Modern Workplace project is based on the implementation of Microsoft 365 and Intune. This brings the Court into alignment with international standards in the field of information security.

### Modern Workplace Project Approach

The project is being implemented in phases.

One of the first major steps was the rollout of new hardware at all locations. Every employee now has a modern workspace, consisting of a laptop, docking station, peripherals, and two monitors. This not only ensures a standardized and ergonomic workspace but also enabled hybrid working.

The migration to the new cloud environment took place in early December 2025. Subsequently, the further configuration and optimization of the digital workplace will begin in the first quarter of 2026.

### Results and Impact

The Modern Workplace Project will lead to a significant improvement in the digital work environment. The expected results and impact are:

- Secure and flexible working: employees will be able to work securely anywhere and anytime, regardless of their location.
- Improved collaboration and information exchange, enabling teams to work more efficiently.
- Up-to-date security: Data and device protection will comply with the most current standards and best practices.
- More efficient IT management: The management of IT systems will become simpler, less error-prone, and more scalable.

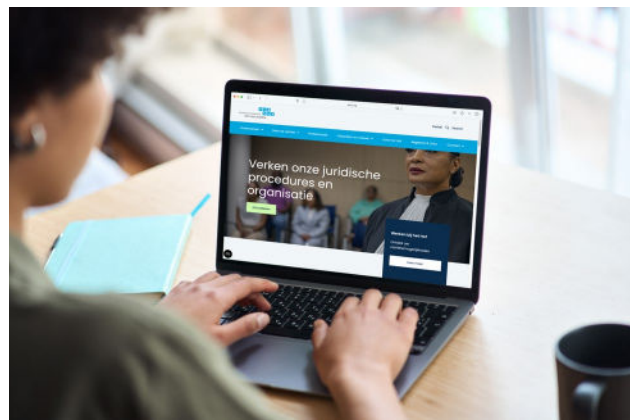
With the successful completion of the Modern Workplace Project and the rollout of new laptops, a stable foundation has been laid for further digitization. In 2026, the focus will be on optimizing the cloud environment. The Court will continue to invest in innovation and security to ensure the quality of service remains guaranteed.

## 2.5 Communication

The past period saw a significant increase in communication and information-sharing opportunities and events. Through press conferences, radio and television interviews, and more intensive use of social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and video platforms like YouTube, there was a strong focus on transparent and accessible communication. In addition, the launch of the new website marked a special and important milestone in the communication strategy

### Joint Court of Justice Launches New Website

On Friday, October 24, 2025, the Court held the soft launch of its new website, [www.ghvj.org](http://www.ghvj.org). With this first, preliminary version, the Court is taking an important step toward a more modern and accessible online environment. The full multilingual version of the website will follow in 2026 and will also be available in Papiamentu, Papiamentu, and English. The new website will continue to be developed in the coming period. This will include the addition of new features, such as video content, more detailed information on various types of cases, and improvements in accessibility for people with visual or hearing impairments. With this revamped website, the Court aims to further strengthen its services to the public and make the administration of justice in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom more accessible.



### The Court commemorates freedom and democracy

On Monday, May 5, 2025, the Court reflected on freedom and democracy in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom, shortly after the Court's 156th anniversary on May 1, 2025. Activities took place in Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten and included lunches, lectures, documentaries, and interactive quizzes that emphasized the value of freedom and human rights, with a focus on, among other things, World War II and the December Murders in Suriname. During the annual Freedom Dinner, the symbolic Freedom Soup was shared, prepared each year by a Dutch chef with a personal story. The soup symbolizes connection and is shared throughout the Kingdom.



### Liber emicorum for Jan de Boer

On June 5, 2025, a surprise reception was held at the Curaçao Museum in honor of Prof. Jan de Boer, in recognition of his many years of dedication to the modernization of the civil codes in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom and Suriname. During the gathering, speeches were given, a sonnet was recited, and a gift was presented. Court President Mauritz de Kort emphasized De Boer's great expertise and his significant contribution to the legal system in the region. Prof. De Boer received a special collection, Liber Amicorum, containing 28 essays by, among others, (former) fellow judges, intended as a token of appreciation and as a reference work for practicing lawyers.



### Second edition of Konosé bo Isla

In February 2025, the Court in Curaçao resumed the Konosé bo Isla project, a series of lectures and activities that offer colleagues a deeper understanding of the culture, history, and customs of Curaçao. The initiative is aimed at both new and existing staff and contributes to a stronger connection with society and a better understanding of the broader historical and social context of the Caribbean islands within the Kingdom. Activities included lectures on political history, an excursion focusing on the slave rebellion, and a cultural evening filled with music and tradition. This second edition was successfully concluded in August 2025.



**Visit by communications staff from government agencies**

In March 2025, the Court in Kas di Korte welcomed communications staff from various government agencies. During the visit, they were given a presentation on the role and activities of the Court, followed by a tour of the cells. The participants also attended a criminal hearing, which gave them a close-up look at the daily practice of the administration of justice. The visit offered an informative and valuable insight into the work of the Court.

**Summer Court 2025**

In August 2025, the fourth edition of the Caribbean Summer Court took place on Curaçao and Aruba (see section 2.3, under “Recruiting Staff”). The participating law students followed an intensive program in which they gained practical experience in criminal law, civil law, and administrative law and became acquainted with the workings of the judiciary.



**Buki di Pret: an educational visit to the court**

In August 2025, Buki di Pret visited the courts in Aruba and Bonaire. Buki di Pret is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to provide children aged 6–13 with an enjoyable summer vacation and new experiences. This time, the focus in Aruba was on bullying on social media, during which the children were informed about its negative consequences. In addition, they prepared a mock trial about aggression and acted it out in the courtroom, allowing them to learn about the course of a trial and the workings of the legal system in an interactive and educational way



**Courthouse tours support a good cause**

During the guided tours of the historic Courthouse in Sint Maarten led by one of the judges, visitors not only learn about the building’s rich history but are also asked to make a voluntary donation. The proceeds go to a charity or social initiative. In June 2025, a donation was presented to the Sint Maarten delegation to support their participation in a conference. Special thanks go to Jean Marc Augusty, who

for many years devoted himself with great dedication to historical research on the Courthouse. His work has yielded valuable insights into the significance and background of this monumental building.



## 2.6 Caribbeanization

### The selection procedure for the RAIO training program

To become a judge or public prosecutor in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom, a local legal professional must first complete a training program as a judicial officer in training (raio): the raio training program. This program lasts 4.5 years and is intended for legal professional with at least four years of work experience in, preferably, at least two areas of law, who also meet the requirements of the Caribbeanization policy. Work experience outside the judiciary is an advantage. Applicants must demonstrate sufficient insight into the issues affecting the societies of the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom. This social orientation may be demonstrated, for example, through additional roles, administrative activities, volunteer work, or other forms of engagement across the broader social sphere. Legal professional with extensive work experience may, following selection, be eligible for appointment as a trainee judge (rio) for a 2.5-year training program.

In 2024, the Court introduced a new trainee judge selection procedure and implemented it immediately that same year.

The selection procedure is designed to identify candidates who are expected to possess the personal qualities and skills necessary to perform the duties of a judge or a public prosecutor. They must possess the learning ability, attitude, and personal qualities that give reason to expect they will successfully complete the (rigorous) training to become a magistrate. In addition, formal requirements and compliance with the Caribbeanization policy are assessed. This policy can be found on the Court's website.

Two selection committees are involved in the selection process: the Preliminary Selection Committee and the Selection Committee. These committees include representatives from the Court, the Public Prosecutor's Offices, and the University of Curaçao or Aruba. In addition, the President of the Court and the Attorneys General of the countries appoint two members who do not belong to the judiciary. Components of the selection procedure include document screening, interview rounds, an assessment, and an integrity review.

Using this selection procedure, three raio candidates and one rio candidate were selected in 2024. The selected rio candidate began the training program in August 2025. Two of the selected raio candidates started in September 2025, and the third raio candidate began the raio training program in November 2025.

At the end of December 2025, the Court published a new Raio vacancy. By recruiting Raio and Rio candidates annually, among other measures, the Court continues its efforts to attract local legal professionals to the judiciary.

## 2.7 Court Academy

In line with section 2.3 on Human Resources (HR), in 2025 the Hof Academy once again fulfilled its mission to contribute to the continuing education of Hof employees and to ensure a structural culture of learning and development within the organization. With a broad and coherent range of training programs, courses, and development activities, all job levels and organizational units were supported in their professional development.

### Knowledge weeks

The Knowledge Weeks are an important part of the Court's development into a continuously learning organization. These learning weeks offer judges and court clerks and increasingly, other colleagues within the Court as well the opportunity to deepen their knowledge, strengthen their skills, and keep abreast of current developments in their fields. Two Knowledge Weeks were organized in 2025.

The first Knowledge Week took place from April 7 through 11, 2025, and focused on current legal issues and in-depth courses in specific areas of law. In civil law, recent developments in general property law were addressed. Subsequently, special attention was given to torts and related aspects of public-private law. In criminal law, the focus was on the justification of evidence, argumentation, responding to defenses, and various current issues in criminal law and criminal procedure. In administrative law, topics such as administrative fines and subsidies were covered. Tax law focused on recent Supreme Court case law, the influence of EU law, and preliminary rulings, including tax penalty law and review against general legal principles. The course on Tax Penalty Law was open to tax inspectors and tax advisors from the various islands.

The desire to further expand Knowledge Week across all divisions of the Court, and to provide ongoing learning opportunities for colleagues in other departments, took further shape in 2025. For example, a customized program was offered to the administrative support staff at the Curaçao and Bonaire offices. On Bonaire, the focus was on skills training, with an emphasis on time management and dealing with difficult clients. On Curaçao, there was a particular need for in-depth knowledge in the area of family law, and a practical workshop on interpreting legal texts was provided. Additionally, an interactive training session focused on client-oriented and effective correspondence.

The second Knowledge Week took place from September 22 to 26, 2025, and featured a thematic focus on judicial decision-making for judges and court clerks.

Drawing on various academic disciplines, a four-day program involved group reflection on the decision-making process, with attention given to psychological mechanisms, intuition, and the prevention of tunnel vision, among other topics.

For administrative support staff, a customized program was offered at each location during this period, tailored to the specific needs of the employees. At the Aruba location, a special program was provided, focused on Work Management and Energy. In addition, the Introduction to Law course was launched.

Administrative support staff on Bonaire attended a Mindfulness workshop.

At the Curaçao and Sint Maarten locations, administrative support staff were offered training in Effective Working and Dealing with Difficult Clients.

In 2026, the focus will be on deepening legal knowledge for administrative support staff. For now, and in the future, the Court will continue to pay close attention to terrorist

financing, money laundering, and related topics within criminal law for both judges and court clerks.

### **Other learning and development activities**

In addition to the Knowledge Weeks, the Hof Academy organized various supplementary learning and development activities in 2025, including lunch meetings with guest speakers, seminars, and case law discussions. The Intercultural Communication training was completed at the Aruba location, meaning it has now been offered at all Hof locations. Additionally, the Voice of the Child course was provided, in which chain partners also participated.

At the Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire locations, Papiamentu and Papiamentu lessons were once again offered at both beginner and advanced levels. For administrative support, additional training sessions were also organized, including in the area of digital skills. For the administrative support staff at the Bonaire and Sint Maarten locations, a team-building training session was offered using the TMA methodology. This training focused on enhancing mutual cooperation and understanding of individual talents and motivations.

For the staff of the Operations Management Department, a structured course offering will be developed in the coming year.

Through these activities, the Court's training and development policy was further implemented in 2025, with the aim of strengthening and broadening the knowledge and expertise of its employees.

## **2.8 Integrity**

The Court places great importance on a culture centered on integrity, transparency, and security. Over the past year, various initiatives have been implemented to further embed these values within the organization and actively encourage dialogue on integrity.

### **Official introduction of confidential advisors**

To support employees and provide a safe reporting structure; the external confidential advisors have been made more visible. During an introductory workshop, held both in person and online, their role was clearly explained, including situations in which employees can approach them.

In addition, the focus was on connecting communication, with practical tools for conducting open, respectful, and safe conversations. The external confidential advisors publish an annual report each year. Based on this, any trends can be identified and actions taken.

### Integrity café ‘Over de Streep’

The Integrity Café ‘Over de Streep’ was launched within the Court to bring the code of conduct to life. During these interactive sessions, employees were able to engage in accessible discussions with one another about key themes from the Code of Conduct, such as inappropriate behavior, freedom of speech, and the use of social media. The sessions contribute to awareness, knowledge sharing, and an open culture.

### Integrity summit dutch caribbean 2025

In November 2025, the Court was represented at the Integrity Summit Dutch Caribbean. Representatives from organizations across all six islands of the Caribbean part of the Kingdom and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations gathered to share best practices and discuss developments in integrity. The insights gained provide inspiration for further strengthening the integrity policy within the Court.

### Outlook

The experiences and insights of the past year form an important basis for the further development of the integrity policy, which will take further shape in 2026. In the coming year, specific themes—including those related to the code of conduct—will be further highlighted and brought to the attention of employees in various ways. The aim is to create a work environment in which employees feel safe and supported, and in which integrity is actively practiced and open to discussion.

## 2.9 Collaboration and internationalization

The Court is involved in various regional and international entities, either directly or through its members.

### President of the Supreme Court of the Netherlands pays a working visit to all branches

The President of the Supreme Court of the Netherlands, Ms. Dineke de Groot, paid a working visit to all branches of the Court from February 3 through 13, 2025. Her program began in Aruba with an audience at Cas Ceremonial di Gobernador with the Acting Governor of Aruba. During her working visit, Ms. De Groot met with various local authorities, including the Guardianship Council, the Probation Service, the Bar Association, and the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the

various countries. In addition, she gave guest lectures at the universities, titled “The Supreme Court of the Netherlands in 2025.” To conclude her working visit to Aruba, Ms. De Groot attended the formal swearing-in ceremony of Jane Jansen as vice president.



### Prime Minister Schoof visits courthouse

From May 9 through 14, 2025, Prime Minister Schoof paid an introductory visit to Bonaire, Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, Saba, and Sint Eustatius. The trip focused on the Kingdom in a changing world and provided an opportunity to meet with local governments and institutions, including the Courthouse in Sint Maarten, and to gain insight into regional developments and challenges.



### Court Delegation attends farewell ceremony for President of the Caribbean Court of Justice

In June 2025, Mr. Adrian Saunders stepped down as President of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ). Mr. Saunders, who also served as Chair of the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO), is retiring from his position after an impressive career.

The Court is not part of the CCJ's jurisdiction, but as a member of the CAJO, the Court is closely involved in developments within the Caribbean legal community.

This network provides the Court with valuable insights into the specific challenges of Caribbean legal practice and how best to address them locally. For this reason, a delegation from the Court, consisting of Court President Mauritsz de Kort and Senior Policy Advisor André Steg, attended the farewell ceremony in Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Saunders' personal farewell reflected his good relationship with the Court.



### U.S. Consul General visits the court

The importance of a well-functioning legal system as the foundation for a safe society and an attractive investment climate is widely recognized. In that context, Mr. Ramón (Chico) Negron, Consul General of the United States, visited the Kas di Korte in Curaçao in June 2025. The visit focused on shared values regarding the rule of law and cooperation within the judicial system.

Mr. Negron received a detailed explanation of the organization and duties of the Court, which administers justice in all countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Caribbean. Discussions also covered the specific judicial challenges on the islands and the role of international cooperation—including with the United States—in strengthening the rule of law. Topics such as cross-border crime, capacity building, and knowledge sharing were

addressed. At the conclusion of the visit, President Mauritsz de Kort and Director Martin Lutttge presented Mr. Negron with a photo book by the Curaçaoan artist Carlo Walle as a token of appreciation.



### Celebration of the 75th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

In 2025, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) celebrated its 75th anniversary. For decades, this convention has been the cornerstone of human rights protection, both in Europe and in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. To mark this special anniversary, various educational and creative activities were organized from Monday, October 27, through Friday, October 31, 2025, in Aruba, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten. Judge Jolien Schukking, elected on behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the European Court of Human Rights, played an active role in these activities in Aruba and Curaçao. She engaged with young people about the meaning of human rights and the role they play in daily life.



Educational and creative activities took place on various islands in collaboration with local youth theater and dance organizations. In addition, Judge Schukking delivered a keynote speech during a roundtable discussion at the University of Aruba, attended by politicians and representatives of civil society organizations. She also met with the Governors.

Moot court competitions were organized on St. Eustatius and Saba, in which young people, under the guidance of a local judge, argued a fictional case centered on a human rights issue. These activities helped raise awareness of the anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights in a broad and engaging way.

### Services provided by the Dutch Institute for Human Rights in the Dutch Caribbean

Starting January 1, 2026, residents of Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba who feel they have been discriminated against can file a complaint with the Dutch Institute for Human Rights. The Institute will then assess whether discrimination has actually occurred or, if more appropriate, offer mediation.

In the run-up to the launch date, Commission Chair Rick Lawson and his colleagues visited the Dutch Caribbean in late November 2025. Judge Solange Christiaan and attorney Gerald Simmons-De Jong have been appointed as alternate Commission members from the region.

Starting in 2026, the Board will use the facilities of the Court on Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba to hold hearings.



## 2.10 Accommodations

### Progress of the City Hall renovation

In 2025, significant steps were taken toward the realization of the renovation and new construction of the City Hall. During the first half of 2025, substantial preparatory work was carried out behind the scenes, which is essential for the further progress of the project.



A start was made with drafting the specifications, which form an important basis for the tendering and execution of the construction works. In addition, various advisory processes were completed, particularly in the area of fire safety. The required permits were also applied for. By the end of 2025, the heritage permit had been granted. This permit concerns approval for the renovation of the historic part of the City Hall.

Furthermore, a presentation was given to the temporary housing committee of Parliament. During this session, the plans for the renovation and new construction were

presented, and the possibility of relocating Parliament to an alternative location at an earlier stage was discussed. This is particularly relevant in light of the planned construction activities and the associated (noise) disturbances. Agreements on this matter were reached with Parliament in 2025.

To keep external stakeholders and the general public informed about the project's progress, a special website has been launched. Monthly updates are posted at <https://renovatiehofvanjustitie.com/>.

By the end of 2025, the first phase of work had been completed in the old City Hall. This primarily involved the removal of non-original elements, such as suspended ceilings, carpeting, outdated air conditioning systems, and non-original paneling.

The current schedule calls for the building to be ready for reuse by the Court in early 2030.

## Aruba

### Expansion of the court of Aruba to improve facilities and judicial services

In October, the Court of Aruba received formal approval from the Minister of Justice to construct a satellite office, which will be located within walking distance of the main building. This expansion is necessary due to the increasing strain on current facilities. With a staff of approximately 83 employees (excluding CEA staff and on-call interpreters), an expected increase in staffing levels in the coming years, and an immediate need for one or two additional courtrooms, the existing facilities do not provide sufficient space. The expansion will enable the General Court to continue to provide a safe, healthy, and efficient working environment and thereby ensure the quality of justice. A working group has now been tasked with further preparing and developing the organizational, architectural, and facilities-related aspects of the project. The project is scheduled for completion in 2027.

## 2.11 High-profile cases

### ARUBA

#### *Former minister convicted of fraud and abuse of office*

While serving as minister from 2017 through 2019, the defendant repeatedly defrauded or attempted to defraud the country of Aruba and abused his position. Together with his co-defendant(s), he favored applicants for land parcels in the allocation of land, even though they were not entitled to them under policy, and he also issued employment contracts and paid the corresponding salaries and allowances, even though the co-defendants did not perform any work for the country of Aruba. The defendant was sentenced to 365 days in prison, 319 of which are suspended, with credit for time served in pretrial detention, and to 240 hours of community service. In addition, as an ancillary penalty, he was removed from public office for a period of 3 years. The defendant was acquitted of passive bribery. An appeal has been filed against the judgment.

VERDICT 

#### *Gender designation on a birth certificate*

Although Aruba has no legal provision allowing the gender designation on a birth certificate to be changed following a transition process, a subsequent note must be added to the individual's birth certificate (pursuant to Article 8 of the ECHR).

VERDICT 

### *Convictions in the Tulipan investigation into fraud at the Arubahuis*

The Tulipan investigation concerns financial irregularities at the Arubahuis during the period when the main suspect served as Minister Plenipotentiary there and the co-defendant served as acting director. The main suspect has been sentenced to 20 months in prison, 10 months of which are suspended, for (complicity in) embezzlement and abuse of office. In the concurrent forfeiture proceedings, he must repay the sum of Afl. 138,688.73 in unlawfully obtained gains as a result of his conviction. The co-defendant was sentenced to a prison term of 6 months, almost entirely suspended, and additionally to community service.

[VERDICT 1](#) [VERDICT 2](#) [VERDICT 3](#)

### *Public prosecutor's office required to inform suspect of charges*

Criminal summary proceedings pursuant to Article 43 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, seeking an order directing the Public Prosecutor's Office to immediately inform the petitioner of the nature and grounds of the charges brought against him. The Court finds that the petitioner's position differs from that of the average citizen and that exceptional and compelling circumstances apply to the petitioner, which are, moreover, closely intertwined with matters affecting the national interest. The Court orders the Public Prosecutor's Office to notify the petitioner in writing within 14 days from today whether he is a suspect in an ongoing investigation and, if so, to which criminal offenses the suspicion in that investigation currently relates.

[VERDICT](#)

### *New guideline on the reimbursement of litigation costs*

It is unreasonable to deny reimbursement of litigation costs to a party who incurs such costs in connection with a successful request to suspend a contested decision and/or to grant a provisional measure (Article 54 of the National Ordinance on Administrative Justice, Lar). The new policy on litigation costs also applies to requests for enforcement (Article 53 of the Lar) and to requests for reimbursement of litigation costs upon withdrawal of an appeal, because the administrative body fully complied with the appeal during the proceedings. The same policy will be applied in civil service cases. The new policy on litigation costs applies to ongoing and future proceedings and has no retroactive effect. In principle, the amount of litigation costs to be reimbursed will be based on the rate applicable in the related proceedings on the merits, in this case Afl. 700 per point of the case. For requests for specific performance, a standard (lump-sum) rate of Afl. 175 per procedural point applies.

[VERDICT](#)

### *Prohibiting a member of Parliament from being represented abroad as a suspect*

The Parliament represents the entire Aruban people. When the Parliament, as representatives of the entire Aruban people, decides that a Member of Parliament, as a suspect of a criminal offense, may not represent them (and thus the Aruban people) abroad, the final word has been spoken, until a majority of the Parliament thinks otherwise and changes the policy. The civil court will only be able to intervene in exceptional circumstances, for example when a Member of Parliament can demonstrate that he cannot exercise his powers guaranteed in the Constitution, within the meaning of Article 25 of the ICCPR. This is not the case here. There is no violation of any fundamental right.

[VERDICT](#)

**BONAIRE**

*The decision to substitute Selibon Lagun is substantively justified but procedurally untenable*

In December 2024, the Government Representative issued a decision to act in lieu of the Executive Council: the Government Representative decided to take the necessary decisions regarding licensing, supervision, and enforcement at Selibon Lagun in place of the Executive Council. A decision to act in lieu of the Executive Council is rare. The Court heard the case in 2025. In the Court’s view, there was every reason for a substitution. The Executive Council had failed to make certain decisions, or had not made them in full, when it should have done so. However, the decision to act in lieu of the Executive Board cannot stand because the State Representative, in line with the administrative intervention ladder he himself had declared applicable, should have set the Executive Board a final (very short) deadline to still implement the measures prescribed by the State Representative on its own.

VERDICT 

*Homicide in Bonaire: 13 years’ imprisonment and illegal firearm possession*

On the night of 10 November 2024, a young man was shot and killed in the center of Bonaire. The suspect admitted that he fired multiple shots at close range at the victim. In July 2025, the suspect was convicted of homicide and unlawful possession of a firearm. The Court imposed a prison sentence of 13 years. The suspect was acquitted of murder, as premeditation could not be established. The injured party was declared inadmissible in respect of the claimed non-material damages (shock damage), as the BES islands do not have a legal framework for awarding damages for emotional loss (affection damage). The claim for material damages, however, was granted. An appeal has been filed in this case.

VERDICT 

*Fisherman convicted of smuggling 117 kilograms of drugs and firearms*

In August 2025, a suspect was convicted of importing/smuggling firearms and drugs. In both cases, the suspect, a fisherman, returned to Bonaire by boat. In one case, 117 kilograms of drugs were hidden in a bench on the boat. In the other case, firearms were found in the water, right next to where the suspect had been working in the water. The weapons were in a dry bag with a bottle attached to it as a buoy. In both cases, the suspect denied any knowledge of the drugs or the weapons. The Court found the suspect guilty in both cases.

The defenses raised regarding irregularities in the investigation were rejected. A prison sentence of 8 years was imposed. The case has been appealed.

VERDICT 

*Archival research on long-undivided estates*

In Bonaire, there are many estates that have remained undivided for a long time (“long-undivided estates”). Many of these estates have remained undivided for (more than) a hundred years, which complicates their settlement.

A legal provision specifically introduced for this purpose (Article 3:200a of the Civil Code et seq.) may offer a solution. Some of the cases involving old estates currently pending before the Court in Bonaire concern properties registered as “Owner unknown.” The question is whether these properties belong to the undivided estates. For this reason, in 2025, the court appointed an expert in such cases to conduct archival research in Curaçao and Bonaire.

VERDICT 

### *Court addresses demotion, dismissal, and severance compensation*

The cases—both summary proceedings and proceedings on the merits—concern an employment dispute involving an employee of a television station. The matter is noteworthy because it raised several labor law issues, including demotion, incapacity for work, summary dismissal, termination of the employment contract, and the level of severance compensation. The case attracted significant public attention, as the employee was a well-known presenter/reporter on Bonaire and the matter received media coverage.

VERDICT  
(judgement of the merits)

VERDICT  
(summary proceedings)

## CURAÇAO

### *Claim by medical specialists regarding the LNT dismissed*

The association of medical specialists sought a declaratory judgment that the terms of employment in effect between Curaçao Medical Center and the medical professionals—specifically regarding indexation and salary components—are not restricted by the National Ordinance on Top Income Standards, Landsverordening normering topinkomens, LNT. The court dismissed the association’s claim because the LNT also prevents indexation and wage components that exceed the statutory ceiling during the transition period.

VERDICT

### *Interest loss compensated, claim for non-material damages denied*

The plaintiff is claiming restitution from the Government of Curaçao for overpaid property tax and real estate tax, as well as compensation for damages suffered as a result. The court grants the claim for compensation for damages consisting of lost interest, as it has been established that the initial tax assessments on the basis of which the plaintiff paid were unlawful. The claim for non-material damages, based on the exceeding of the reasonable time limit in the tax case, is rejected by the court. Referring to the Supreme Court’s ruling of January 19, 2024, ECLI:NL:HR:2024:50, the court considers in this regard that the determination of whether a reasonable time limit has been exceeded in a tax case rests with the tax court, and in this case it has not been established that the tax court found any exceeding of the reasonable time limit for adjudication.

VERDICT

### *No legal basis for secure placement of a minor*

The Court rejects the request to place a minor in the secure unit of the Curaçao Juvenile Detention Center (JJIC) due to the lack of a legal basis. The secure placement carried out by the JJIC without prior judicial authorization constitutes unlawful deprivation of liberty and violates Article 5 of the ECHR, Article 37 of the CRC, and Article 17 of the Constitution of Curaçao.

Only a judge may grant permission for the placement of a minor in isolation for a short period to stabilize a short-term crisis situation, whereby the minor’s particularly vulnerable position must always be the starting point and proportionality and subsidiarity must be assessed. The immediate termination of the isolation is ordered.

VERDICT

### *Police unit chief convicted of abuse of office and forgery*

On June 5, 2025, the Court convicted the head of the Special Laws Unit of the police for repeatedly abusing his position. He improperly interfered in applications for firearm permits submitted by people he knew, even though those individuals were ineligible for a permit under the policy. In addition, he was also found guilty of forgery. Through his actions, the defendant contributed to the problem of illegal firearm possession in the country. Due to his position, the defendant served as a role model in society, and absolute integrity was expected of him. He seriously violated that trust. He was sentenced to 240 hours of community service and a six-month suspended prison sentence with a three-year probation period. In addition, he has been barred from working as a police officer for a period of 3 years.

[VERDICT](#)

### *Judge rules radio host's suspension reasonable*

In summary proceedings, the radio host demanded that Radio Mas lift the suspension imposed on him and allow him to perform his usual duties. The judge dismissed the claim, ruling that the suspension was reasonable and not disproportionate, and that the employer had a sufficiently compelling interest in suspending the employee. The suspension was intended as a disciplinary measure and was the only way for the employer to prevent undesirable situations from arising.

[VERDICT](#)

## COURT OF APPEALS

### *Themis Appeal*

The Court convicted two defendants for participating in the criminal organization “No Limit Soldiers.” One defendant was also convicted of involvement in incitement to murder and international drug trafficking. He was sentenced to 13 years and 6 months in prison. The other defendant was also convicted of habitual money laundering. He was sentenced to 7 years and 9 months in prison. His home, car, jewelry, and cash were forfeited. He must also repay money to the State pursuant to a forfeiture order regarding unlawfully obtained gains.

[VERDICT 1](#)

[VERDICT 2](#)

### *Crow Appeal*

The Court has sentenced several defendants to final prison terms ranging from a few months to 11 years for their involvement in (or preparation of) multiple international drug shipments through the port of Curaçao. The defendants included both port employees and others. The port employees abused their positions to facilitate the export of hard drugs. The Court held this against them. With regard to other defendants, the Court took into account that there was organized collaboration and that it is plausible that large sums of money were involved in the shipments.

[VERDICT 1](#)

[VERDICT 2](#)

[VERDICT 3](#)

[VERDICT 4](#)

[VERDICT 5](#)

[VERDICT 6](#)

[VERDICT 7](#)

## ST. MAARTEN

### *Court upholds legality of former port director's dismissal*

The port is a key economic pillar for St. Maarten. This year, the Court has issued two rulings concerning the port. The first ruling concerned the former director of the Port, who had been convicted in the first instance of criminal charges related to invoice fraud and embezzlement and had also been dismissed. However, he was acquitted on appeal. As a result, he initiated civil proceedings against the Country and the Port, arguing that his dismissal was retroactively unlawful. The Court ruled that the dismissal was lawful. The former director's claim was dismissed, while the Port's counterclaim for damages was granted.

VERDICT 

### *Court rejects claim by original project developer in port development*

The Court has ruled in a civil case concerning the development of a plot of land near the piers where Sint Maarten's cruise ships dock. The contract with the original project developer was terminated, after which the project was awarded to another developer. The original developer sought damages from the operating companies of the Port Authority, the politician H. – who was involved in fraud and bribery – and the new developer, arguing that the termination of the contract had caused him significant harm. In earlier rulings, the Court dismissed the claim against the Port Authority and awarded USD 92 million in the claim against H. In the most recent ruling, the claim against the new developer was dismissed.

VERDICT 

### *Sint Maarten member of Parliament ordered to issue partial rectification*

In summary proceedings, a member of Parliament from Sint Maarten was sued for making unlawful statements about a lawyer in connection with the lawyer's candidacy for the position of chair of the Supervisory Board of the Central Bank of Curaçao and Sint Maarten. The Court ruled that the statements were partially unlawful and ordered the member of parliament to issue a partial retraction.

VERDICT 

### *Convictions following fatal shooting (Operation Firecracker)*

During an incident at a nightlife venue, a shooting occurred resulting in a fatality. Three suspects were prosecuted in connection with this case. It has been established that all three used a firearm. For one suspect, it could not be established that he fired at the victim. This suspect was acquitted of (attempted) manslaughter in concert, but was convicted of possession of a firearm, for which a three-year prison sentence was imposed.

The two other suspects fired (multiple times) in the direction of the victim. The victim was struck by a single bullet and died at the scene. Because it could not be established who fired the fatal shot and there was no evidence of acting in concert, both suspects were convicted of attempted manslaughter and possession of a firearm. A prison sentence of eight years was imposed for these offenses.

VERDICT 1  VERDICT 2  VERDICT 3 

## SINT EUSTATIUS

### *Conviction for international arms trafficking from Sint Maarten and Sint Eustatius*

The Court convicted a defendant of international arms trafficking from Sint Maarten and Sint Eustatius, based on PGP messages. The defendant was found guilty of aiding and abetting the delivery of a firearm and aiding and abetting the attempted importation and delivery of other firearms. In its assessment, the Court took into account considerations regarding jurisdiction and the admissibility of the Public Prosecutor’s case. “Making a profession or habit” is not considered a criminal offense under the BES Firearms Act and cannot be interpreted based on Article 55, paragraph 4, of the WWM. Furthermore, criminal preparation for arms trafficking cannot be established, as the maximum penalty under the BES Firearms Act is six years. For practical reasons, the Public Prosecutor’s Office was declared inadmissible with respect to this charge. The defendant was sentenced to 48 months’ imprisonment.

VERDICT 

### *Court recognizes petitioners as children of their biological father*

The petitioners have asked the Court to determine that [L] is their biological father. Unlike in the Netherlands and the CAS Islands, the BES Islands have no legal framework that allows for this. The Court fills this legal gap based on case law from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and concludes that the petitioners’ request is admissible. An interim order has been issued.

VERDICT 

## SABA

### *Police officer convicted of threats and filing a false report*

On New Year’s Eve 2023/2024, the defendant was stationed on Saba as a police officer. The defendant was celebrating New Year’s Eve with several colleagues at a club. He was in plain clothes and had his service weapon tucked into his waistband. At one point, a commotion broke out around the defendant. The defendant then drew his service weapon and pointed it at the crowd inside the club. The defendant stated that he was attacked and that bottles and glass were thrown at him. The defendant also recorded this in a police report. However, the camera footage shows something different. There was no attack on the suspect, nor were bottles or glass thrown. In July 2025, the suspect was convicted of making threats (pointing his service weapon) and of falsifying an official report (perjury). The Court rejected the defendant’s claim of (putative) self-defense. The police officer was sentenced to a suspended prison term and removal from the office of investigating officer. The case has been appealed.

VERDICT 





3

## Trends in case volumes

### 3.1 Case volumes in context

This chapter provides insight into trends in case volumes in 2025. The Court is handling an increasing number of complex and time-intensive legal cases. The Court finds that the calculation underlying the current classification of case complexity is increasingly failing to adequately reflect the complexity of these cases. In 2026, the Court will continue to work on making this more transparent and thereby better measuring the workload on the organization.

In addition to administering justice, the Court also has a wide range of additional responsibilities, including special proceedings and supervisory functions, such as overseeing guardianships, conservatorships, and mentorships, as well as disciplinary proceedings concerning notaries, attorneys, medical professionals, pharmacists, and bailiffs. The Court also bears responsibility for the training and development of both new talent and current staff. To ensure that sufficient judges, court clerks, and legal administrative staff can be deployed in the future, the Court considers it of great importance to devote continuous attention to training. Finally, ensuring the quality of our judicial proceedings throughout the organization requires attention, for example through peer review and staff training. The efforts and time required by the aforementioned important additional tasks are not included

in the case numbers of this annual report. This means that the Court's efforts and the staffing required for them cannot be analyzed purely on the basis of case numbers.

Starting in 2026, in line with the Court's strategic multi-year plan, the workload associated with these additional tasks will be taken into account. To ensure the long-term viability of the Court and its staff, the 2026 budget and the 2027–2028 multi-year budget are therefore higher than in previous years.

### 3.2 Case Inflow and Outflow

Across the board, case inflow has remained virtually unchanged from the previous reporting year. The total inflow of civil, administrative, and criminal cases at the first instance has decreased slightly compared to 2024, from 35,400 to 35,288. This slight decrease is primarily evident in the number of seizure cases. On the other hand, there has been an increase in payment order cases, partly as a result of the introduction of small claims hearings. The caseload for administrative law cases in 2025 is the same as in 2024.

## Case inflow in first instance

Table 1 | Total case inflow in 2025 compared to 2024

Inflow 2025 GHVJ											
Case Categories	Case cluster	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total	
		2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Civil Proceedings on the Merits	Heavy	242	247	95	87	601	483	170	176	1,108	993
Employment Cases	Heavy	171	144	21	34	81	77	34	36	307	291
Summary Proceedings (Preliminary Relief)	Average	207	175	71	50	219	217	124	118	621	560
KZ Declarations (Court Task)	Average	4	5	0	0	79	66	3	0	86	71
Payment Order Cases	Light	394	528	63	48	608	305	110	111	1,175	992
Default Cases (Civil) & Referrals	Light	282	347	18	14	130	190	44	69	474	620
Disciplinary & Supervisory Cases	Heavy	26	15	5	10	59	71	6	17	96	113
Personal & Family Law Cases	Average	519	560	192	165	740	896	241	244	1,692	1,865
Other EJ Cases	Average	703	651	75	94	1,030	1,007	104	202	1,912	1,954
Requests for Legal Assistance (EJ)	Average	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Seizure Cases	Light	239	273	22	49	168	182	65	120	494	624
Bankruptcy and Suspension of Payments	Heavy	6	10	15	11	34	43	2	1	57	65
Guardianship / Administration Orders	Heavy	84	77	43	36	193	164	42	41	362	318
Child Supervision Orders (Minors)	Heavy	27	43	22	17	61	55	15	10	125	125
<b>Subtotal Civil Law</b>		<b>2,904</b>	<b>3,075</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>4,003</b>	<b>3,756</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>1,145</b>	<b>8,509</b>	<b>8,591</b>
Civil Servant Cases	Heavy	178	168	19	32	226	177	25	16	448	393
Administrative Law (LAR)	Average	650	574	65	61	135	187	193	137	1,043	959
Tax Cases	Average	438	659	42	47	635	623	165	90	1,280	1,419
<b>Subtotal Administrative Law</b>		<b>1,266</b>	<b>1,401</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>2,771</b>	<b>2,771</b>
Bulk Criminal Cases	Light	1,559	1,971	47	62	118	115	35	12	1,759	2,160
Traffic Offenses / Crimes	Average	543	224							543	224
Regular Criminal Cases	Average	631	670	243	235	330	376	382	360	1,586	1,641
Judicial Preliminary Investigations	Heavy	0	7	0	1	11	3	0	2	11	13
Other Examining Magistrate (RC) Actions	Light	1,023	1,213	421	558	1,504	1,493	583	387	3,531	3,651
Searches	Average	74	52	13	28	37	62	46	57	170	199
Requests for Legal Assistance (Criminal)	Average	2	3	2	3	16	11	1	0	21	17
Minor Offenses	Very light	4,134	4,898	588	871	9,925	8,949	1,740	1,415	16,387	16,133
<b>Subtotal Criminal law</b>		<b>7,966</b>	<b>9,038</b>	<b>1,314</b>	<b>1,758</b>	<b>11,941</b>	<b>11,009</b>	<b>2,787</b>	<b>2,233</b>	<b>24,008</b>	<b>24,038</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>12,136</b>	<b>13,514</b>	<b>2,082</b>	<b>2,513</b>	<b>16,940</b>	<b>15,752</b>	<b>4,130</b>	<b>3,621</b>	<b>35,288</b>	<b>35,400</b>

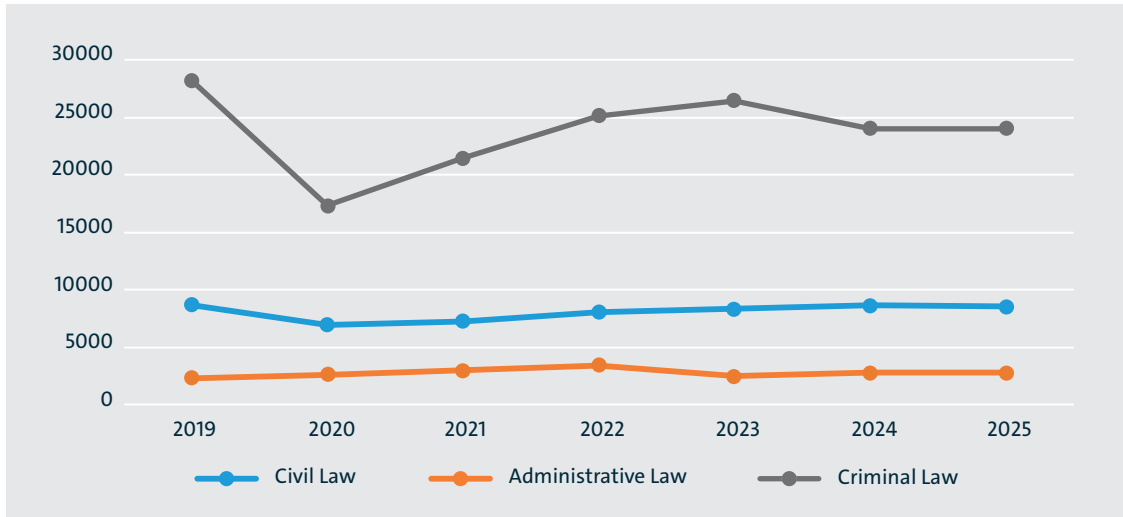
The total number of criminal cases has remained virtually unchanged, with a slight shift in case categories and locations. For example, the caseload of misdemeanor cases has decreased in Aruba and increased in Curaçao. The caseload of administrative law cases is the same as in 2024. The caseload of LAR cases has increased, particularly in Aruba and Sint Maarten. Overall, more civil service cases have also been filed. In contrast, the total caseload of tax cases has decreased.

The total caseload for civil and extrajudicial cases, such as family matters, has declined, primarily in minor cases, such as default judgments and attachment proceedings. However, the caseload of payment order cases—which are also relatively minor—has actually increased. This is attributable to the introduction of the consumer credit docket in Curaçao two years ago, and the introduction of small claims hearings at all locations. This increase is primarily attributable to the Curaçao office, where the caseload of payment order cases has risen sharply. Thanks to the established procedure for handling these monetary claims involving relatively small amounts (small claims), they can be processed quickly and efficiently, providing parties with prompt certainty.

In Aruba, where the inflow of payment order cases has been relatively high in recent years, the inflow has, however, decreased in 2025.

An increase can be seen in the “Other extrajudicial” category. One reason for this is the continued rise in requests for declarations under inheritance law. This is the result of a policy change among notaries on the islands. This category also shows an increase in cases involving long-delayed estate distributions, which are typically very labor-intensive and complex.

**Graph 1 | Inflow trends, 2019–2025**



### Declarations of parental authority

A parent traveling with a minor child must carry the original of a declaration stating that the parent in question has legal custody of the minor, possibly jointly. Until 2023, such declarations were requested from the court only sporadically. In the run-up to the summer of 2023, the courts received more requests for such declarations due to stricter oversight by the countries. In 2023, more than 2,000 requests for a declaration were submitted; in 2024, more than 3,700. In 2025, however, the total number of requests is slightly lower, at just over 2,500.

### Case inflow based on case severity

The severity of a case is based on the average processing time for cases in a particular case category. Case categories with roughly the same average processing time are grouped into a case cluster.

**Table 2 | Case inflow based on case severity**

Inflow 2025 GHvJ										
Case cluster	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Very Light	4,134	4,898	588	871	9,925	8,949	1,740	1,415	16,387	16,133
Light	3,497	4,332	571	731	2,528	2,285	837	699	7,433	8,047
Average	3,771	3,573	703	683	3,221	3,445	1,259	1,208	8,954	8,909
Heavy	734	711	220	228	1,266	1,073	294	299	2,514	2,311
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,136</b>	<b>13,514</b>	<b>2,082</b>	<b>2,513</b>	<b>16,940</b>	<b>15,752</b>	<b>4,130</b>	<b>3,621</b>	<b>35,288</b>	<b>35,400</b>

## Case cluster: very minor

**Table 3 | Very minor offenses case cluster**

Inflow 2025 GHvJ										
Case categories	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Minor offenses	4,134	4,898	588	871	9,925	8,949	1,740	1,415	16,387	16,133
<b>Case cluster very light</b>	<b>4,134</b>	<b>4,898</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>9,925</b>	<b>8,949</b>	<b>1,740</b>	<b>1,415</b>	<b>16,387</b>	<b>16,133</b>

The “very minor” case cluster consists of a single case category: very minor offenses. The inflow of very minor offence cases has decreased significantly in Aruba for the second consecutive year, while Curaçao, the BES, and Sint Maarten have actually seen an increase. The inflow fluctuates every year.

## Minor offenses case cluster

**Table 4 | Minor offenses case cluster**

Inflow 2025 GHvJ										
Case categories	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Payment Order Cases	394	528	63	48	608	305	110	111	1,175	992
Civil and Referte Default Cases	282	347	18	14	130	190	44	69	474	620
Seizure Cases	239	273	22	49	168	182	65	120	494	624
Bulk Criminal Cases	1,559	1,971	47	62	118	115	35	12	1,759	2,160
Other RC Proceedings	1,023	1,213	421	558	1,504	1,493	583	387	3,531	3,651
<b>Case cluster light</b>	<b>3,497</b>	<b>4,332</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>2,528</b>	<b>2,285</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>7,433</b>	<b>8,047</b>

The total caseload from the “minor offenses” cluster has decreased by approximately 600 cases, primarily in the area of bulk criminal cases. These are cases related to, for example, the so-called Hato hearings (in Curaçao) and involve charges against individuals suspected of smuggling small quantities of narcotics. The number of payment order cases has increased, primarily due to the introduction of small claims hearings. The inflow of these cases decreased last year but has increased again this year, particularly in Curaçao. The number of default judgments in civil cases has decreased.

## Average Case Cluster

**Table 5 | Average case cluster**

Inflow 2025 GHvJ										
Case categories	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Summary Proceedings	207	175	71	50	219	217	124	118	621	560
KZ Statements (Court of Appeal)	4	5	0	0	79	66	3	0	86	71
Family Law	519	560	192	165	740	896	241	244	1,692	1,865
Other European Justice Cases	703	651	75	94	1,030	1,007	104	202	1,912	1,954
LAR	650	574	65	61	135	187	193	137	1,043	959
Tax Cases	438	659	42	47	635	623	165	90	1,280	1,419
Regular Criminal Cases	1,174	894	243	235	330	376	382	360	2,129	1,865
Searches	74	52	13	28	37	62	46	57	170	199
Requests for Legal Assistance (European Justice & Criminal)	2	3	2	3	16	11	1	0	21	17
<b>Average Case Cluster</b>	<b>3,771</b>	<b>3,573</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>3,221</b>	<b>3,445</b>	<b>1,259</b>	<b>1,208</b>	<b>8,954</b>	<b>8,909</b>

The inflow of cases from the “average” case cluster remained virtually unchanged, after rising by 15% in 2024.

## Serious Case Cluster

**Table 6 | Serious case cluster**

Inflow 2025 GHvJ										
Case categories	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Civil Litigation	242	247	95	87	601	483	170	176	1,108	993
Labor Law	171	144	21	34	81	77	34	36	307	291
Disciplinary and Supervisory Matters	26	15	5	10	59	71	6	17	96	113
Bankruptcy and Suspension of Payments	6	10	15	11	34	43	2	1	57	65
Guardianship and Administration	84	77	43	36	193	164	42	41	362	318
Juvenile Court Proceedings	27	43	22	17	61	55	15	10	125	125
Public Service Law	178	168	19	32	226	177	25	16	448	393
Preliminary Judicial Investigations	0	7	0	1	11	3	0	2	11	13
<b>Serious Offenses Case Cluster</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>1,266</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>2,514</b>	<b>2,311</b>

The “serious” case cluster shows an increase compared to the previous year. This increase is particularly evident in civil proceedings on Curaçao and labor cases in Aruba.

## Case outflow in first instance

**Table 7 | Case outflow in 2025 compared to 2024**

Outflow 2025 GHvJ											
Case categories	Case cluster	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total	
		2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Civil Merits Proceedings	Heavy	271	288	101	81	517	507	207	165	1,096	1,041
Labor Cases	Heavy	154	176	27	16	90	81	31	33	302	306
Preliminary Injunction Proceedings	Moderate	204	169	71	51	212	215	133	114	620	549
KZ Declarations (Court of Appeal)	Moderate	3	5	0	0	12	10	0	0	15	15
Payment Order Cases	Light	636	381	57	47	573	284	104	118	1,370	830
Civil Default Cases & Referrals	Light	282	347	18	14	130	190	44	69	474	620
Disciplinary & Supervisory Cases	Heavy	22	9	10	6	44	74	12	20	88	109
Family & Personal Cases	Moderate	536	552	197	156	745	828	237	163	1,715	1,699
Other EJ Cases	Moderate	678	590	78	64	1,000	999	102	161	1,858	1,814
Requests for Legal Assistance (EJ)	Moderate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Seizure Cases	Light	239	260	18	49	157	183	62	119	476	611
Bankruptcy and Suspension of Payments	Heavy	7	3	11	7	32	40	1	1	51	51
Placement under Guardianship/ Administration	Heavy	72	76	71	23	155	145	18	20	316	264
Juvenile Detention Orders	Heavy	29	43	10	22	35	23	3	15	77	103
<b>Subtotal Civil Law</b>		<b>3,133</b>	<b>2,899</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>3,702</b>	<b>3,579</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>998</b>	<b>8,458</b>	<b>8,012</b>
Civil Service Cases	Heavy	249	247	34	12	212	92	18	28	513	379
LAR	Moderate	670	480	50	63	248	166	221	146	1,189	855
Tax Cases	Moderate	435	369	29	62	446	513	77	188	987	1,132
<b>Subtotal Administrative Law</b>		<b>1,354</b>	<b>1,096</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>2,689</b>	<b>2,366</b>
Bulk Criminal Cases	Light	1,559	1,971	47	62	118	115	35	12	1,759	2,160
Traffic violations / offenses	Moderate	543	224	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Regular criminal cases	Moderate	631	670	243	235	330	376	382	360	1,586	1,641
Preliminary judicial investigations	Heavy	0	7	0	1	11	3	0	2	11	13
Other RC proceedings	Light	1,023	1,213	421	558	1,504	1,493	583	387	3,531	3,651
Searches	Moderate	74	52	13	28	37	62	46	57	170	199
Requests for legal assistance (Criminal)	Moderate	2	3	2	3	16	11	1	0	21	17
Violations	Very light	4,134	4,898	588	871	9,925	8,949	1,740	1,415	16,387	16,133
<b>Subtotal Criminal Law</b>		<b>7,966</b>	<b>9,038</b>	<b>1,314</b>	<b>1,758</b>	<b>11,941</b>	<b>11,009</b>	<b>2,787</b>	<b>2,233</b>	<b>24,008</b>	<b>24,038</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>12,453</b>	<b>13,033</b>	<b>2,096</b>	<b>2,431</b>	<b>16,549</b>	<b>15,359</b>	<b>4,057</b>	<b>3,593</b>	<b>35,155</b>	<b>34,416</b>

The number of cases discharged has increased compared to 2024, due to the rise in payment order cases, which have a short processing time.

In terms of numbers, the outflow of other EJ cases in 2025 has remained nearly the same. This means that the increase in requests for a declaration of acceptance or renunciation of an inheritance, following an upward trend in recent years, has stabilized.

## Pending caseload

The pending caseload consists of cases that have already been filed but have not yet been resolved. The Court always has a pending caseload, as cases that are filed often cannot be resolved immediately. For example, the judge must first hear the parties and consider the matter before a judgment can be drafted. It also happens that cases are adjourned.

Because the inflow is virtually equal to the outflow, the backlog at the end of 2025 has decreased only slightly.

**Table 8 | Pending caseload**

Backlog court in the first instance end 2025 vs end 2024										
Case Categories	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Civil Proceedings	428	467	83	85	525	438	156	194	1,192	1,184
Labor Cases	95	78	15	21	10	18	16	13	136	130
Preliminary Injunction Proceedings	52	52	9	10	38	32	9	22	108	116
Payment Orders	138	384	21	15	91	59	39	33	289	491
EJ: Guardianship/Conservatorship	45	35	46	47	177	140	98	80	366	302
KZ Declarations (Court of Appeal Jurisdiction)	1	1	0	0	272	208	3	0	276	209
EJ: Other cases	70	110	48	56	87	59	38	103	243	328
EJ: Personal & family matters	246	305	67	68	330	343	115	159	758	875
Bankruptcies	38	38	16	12	78	78	17	17	149	145
Juvenile detention orders	10	15	45	33	249	261	90	78	394	387
Disciplinary & supervisory matters	56	52	4	7	78	61	8	14	146	134
Seizure cases	0	14	4	3	11	1	4	8	19	26
<b>Civil law</b>	<b>1,179</b>	<b>1,551</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>1,946</b>	<b>1,698</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>4,076</b>	<b>4,327</b>
Civil service matters	284	334	10	25	166	150	17	10	477	519
LAR	286	285	34	18	55	181	44	53	419	537
SVB/CVB/SZV cases	46	75	0	2	17	5	11	32	74	114
Tax cases	367	586	20	9	613	517	171	86	1,171	1,198
<b>Administrative law</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>1,280</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>2,141</b>	<b>2,368</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,162</b>	<b>2,831</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>2,797</b>	<b>2,551</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>6,217</b>	<b>6,695</b>

## Processing times

The processing time for a case is presented as the average number of days per case category. The number of days is calculated from the moment the case is filed until the moment it is resolved. A case may be resolved by a court ruling, but it may also be resolved through withdrawal or dismissal. The presented average processing time is the processing time of concluded cases per case category. The processing time is measured at the moment a case is concluded.

The largest difference in processing time compared to the previous year is evident in a case category where the judge actually has little influence on the processing time, namely bankruptcies. A bankruptcy ends when the bankruptcy is lifted. This can sometimes take a very long time. Here, a slight increase of an average of 177 days can be seen.

In addition, the processing time for social security cases has increased. This is the result of the resolution of a number of relatively old cases at the Aruba office, causing the average processing time to rise.

**Table 9 | Processing time**

Case processing times in 2025 vs. 2024											
Case Categories	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Average		Difference in days
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	
Civil Litigation	312	293	264	258	277	298	366	328	305	294	11
Labor Cases	213	249	90	43	89	89	77	111	117	123	-6
Preliminary Injunction Proceedings	95	98	56	99	46	46	37	57	59	75	-16
Order for Payment Cases	206	129	135	100	95	60	150	177	147	116	31
Guardianship/Conservatorship	219	147	489	95	96	276	550	517	338	259	80
Other EJ Cases	32	24	101	85	29	32	88	68	62	52	10
Family Law Cases	204	161	145	120	152	144	150	119	163	136	27
Bankruptcy and Suspension of Payments	983	209	131	28	504	703	30	0	412	235	177
Juvenile Detention Orders	181	86	734	487	1942	1903	491	1107	837	896	-59
Disciplinary and Supervisory Cases	484	984	210	184	257	234	0	0	238	351	-113
Seizure Cases	1	1	2	2	1	6	3	3	2	3	-1
<b>Civil Law</b>											
Civil Service Cases	458	387	215	183	246	222	156	235	269	257	12
LAR	191	208	147	116	495	170	103	192	234	171	62
SVB/CVB/SZV-Zalem	1109	564	332	245	247	198	451	274	535	320	214
Tax Cases	311	190	93	110	339	354	447	341	298	249	49
<b>Administrative Law</b>											

## Judgement on appeal

A litigant who disagrees with a judgment rendered at the trial court level may, in many cases, appeal that decision. The case is then heard by a panel of three (different) judges. The total caseload of appeals has decreased slightly compared to last year. An increase can be seen in civil cases, particularly in the number of payment order cases. This is the result of a number of appeals filed by a single party. The number of civil service cases is significantly lower than the caseload in 2024.

**Table 10 | Inflow of appeal**

Inflow 2025: Appeal to the Court										
Case Categories	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Civil Merits Proceedings	42	46	20	15	123	115	33	41	218	217
Labor Cases	7	21	2	0	14	8	3	6	26	35
Preliminary Injunction Proceedings	39	20	6	8	23	33	18	16	86	77
Attachment Proceedings	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2
Payment Orders	3	1	0	2	74	1	1	1	78	5
EJ: Other Cases	2	0	3	4	6	5	3	1	14	10
EJ: Guardianship/Conservatorship	1	0	2	0	2	1	2	1	7	2
EJ: Personal & Family Matters	16	17	11	3	20	25	8	4	55	49
Bankruptcies	0	2	1	0	1	6	0	0	2	8
Juvenile Detention Orders	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	2	2
Disciplinary & Supervisory Matters	6	2	4	2	8	5	0	2	18	11
HAR Civil	22	9	7	4	32	39	9	13	70	65
<b>Subtotal Civil Law</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>483</b>
Civil Service Cases	43	179	13	4	22	11	8	3	86	197
LAR	63	40	9	4	18	14	8	44	98	102
Tax Cases	42	92	0	2	35	15	14	21	91	130
HAR Administrative	1	4	0	1	2	8	0	0	3	13
<b>Subtotal Administrative Law</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>442</b>
HAR Criminal	19	24	7	15	60	56	24	21	110	116
Criminal Cases	58	61	17	7	100	70	40	48	215	186
<b>Subtotal Criminal Law</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>1,181</b>	<b>1,227</b>

The outflow of appeal cases has decreased with regard to civil cases. This is mainly due to a peak in the caseload in 2024. At that time, significant progress was made in processing cases. In administrative law appeals, an increase in the number of cases resolved can be seen, mainly due to the conclusion of a large number of customs cases in Aruba. These cases were filed in the first instance in 2023 as a result of a conflict between customs officials and the Aruban government.

**Table 11 | Outflow of appeal cases**

<b>Outflow 2025: Appeal to the Court</b>										
Case Categories	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Civil Proceedings	40	44	13	16	139	133	56	49	248	242
Labor Cases	12	36	2	0	22	10	5	15	41	61
Preliminary Injunction Proceedings	26	21	3	5	36	44	16	12	81	82
Seizure Cases	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	2
Payment Orders	1	4	2	0	3	3	1	1	7	8
EJ: Guardianship/Conservatorship	1	2	2	0	2	1	0	1	5	4
EJ: Other Cases	0	3	3	2	6	8	0	1	9	14
EJ: Personal & Family Cases	20	15	9	4	17	37	11	9	57	65
Bankruptcies	1	2	2	0	10	0	0	0	13	2
Juvenile Detention Orders	0	1	1	0	1	8	0	0	2	9
Disciplinary & Supervisory Cases	5	11	3	1	5	7	1	2	14	21
HAR Civil	19	14	7	3	33	51	11	52	70	120
<b>Subtotal Civil Law</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>630</b>
Civil Service Cases	168	31	5	5	15	30	2	1	190	67
LAR	38	41	11	2	21	28	56	14	126	85
Tax Cases	28	12	14	15	14	7	40	5	96	39
HAR Administrative	0	4	0	1	7	4	0	0	7	9
<b>Subtotal Administrative Law</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>191</b>
HAR Criminal	19	24	7	15	60	56	24	21	110	116
Criminal Cases	58	61	17	7	100	70	40	48	215	186
<b>Subtotal Criminal Law</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>1,287</b>	<b>1,123</b>

## Pending caseload

When the inflow exceeds the outflow, a backlog of cases arises. In 2025, the backlog of civil appellate cases decreased, as the outflow exceeded the inflow. The backlog in administrative law and tax cases also declined, mainly as a result of the resolution of the aforementioned customs cases.

Table 12 | Pending caseload of appeal cases

Appeals caseload in 2025 vs. 2024										
Case Categories	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024
Civil Proceedings	87	91	34	26	119	245	71	89	311	451
Labor Cases	17	23	0	0	7	9	6	8	30	40
Preliminary Injunction Proceedings	50	35	14	12	22	34	28	27	114	108
Payment Orders	5	3	0	0	74	3	2	1	81	7
EJ: Guardianship/Conservatorship	2	2	2	0	2	3	0	0	6	5
EJ: Other Cases	1	1	4	2	8	10	1	4	14	17
EJ: Personal & Family Cases	14	22	5	5	18	16	4	6	41	49
Bankruptcies	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2
Juvenile Detention Orders	0	0	0	0	7	4	1	0	8	4
Disciplinary & Supervisory Cases	9	9	5	4	8	17	3	2	25	32
Seizure Cases	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
HAR Civil	10	3	1	1	21	21	0	2	32	27
<b>Civil Law</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>743</b>
Civil Service Cases	40	167	10	1	16	9	8	1	74	178
LAR	15	19	3	6	9	13	1	40	28	78
Tax Cases	42	92	0	1	36	15	14	40	92	148
HAR Administrative	2	2	0	0	1	6	1	1	4	9
<b>Administrative Law</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>413</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>1,156</b>

## 3.3 Complaints procedure

The Court attaches great importance to the proper handling of complaints, in accordance with the core values of independence, impartiality, and timeliness. Therefore, anyone may file a complaint with the Board regarding the manner in which the Court has conducted itself toward them in a particular instance. The complaints procedure and the complaint form can be found on the Court’s website: <https://ghvj.org/over-het-hof/klachtenregeling/>.

In 2025, 19 complaints were filed: 6 in Aruba, 10 in Curaçao, and 3 in Sint Maarten. The overview below describes the complaints and shows how they were handled. A number of complaints were declared inadmissible because complaints cannot be filed regarding the substance of a case, a judge’s reasoning, or procedural actions. For the admissible complaints, explanations were provided in the response letters if they were found to be unfounded. For the remaining complaints, explanations or follow-up actions were provided, apologies were offered, and where necessary, internal attention was requested regarding the course of events.

Two complaints are still pending.

The complaints procedure is evaluated regularly. In 2025, the Board saw no reason to engage the Complaints Advisory Committee to advise on the handling of a complaint.

Island	Complaints Section	Complaint Description	Outcome: Admissible/ Justified
Aruba	Duration of procedures	The Tax and Customs Administration is allowed to exceed deadlines, while this puts the complainant in a bind and does not receive a postponement.	No
	Court decisions	Request for a review of the illegality of the acts of the Court of First Instance.	No
	Court decisions	Requests handling of complaint file that includes objections regarding injustice judge and a request for annulment of judgment, prior to Appeal hearing.	No
	Administrative/judicial decisions	No transcript of the hearing and the minutes are not a complete representation of the hearing.	No
	Administrative processes	Judgment only issued 18 months after judgment. Case 9 years without settlement.	Partly admissible and partly well-founded
	Administrative processes	Missing reference/file number acceptance of inheritance.	Still pending
Curaçao	Court decisions	Considerations and decision of the court.	No
	Administratieve processen	Name of the judge handling the case not received.	Yes
	Other	Complaint, video connection and misinformation.	Not founded
	Duration of procedures	Lengthy delay in the processing of the request for review.	Yes
	Other	Malfunctioning video connections during case handling.	Not founded
	Court decisions	Miscarriage of justice, errors and that the content is not looked at.	No
	Court decisions	The principle of care, the principle of motivation and guarantees of visible impartiality have not been complied with.	No
	Court decisions	Course of events with regard to postponement of the hearing and eviction date.	No
	Administrative/judicial decisions	No follow-up/verdict in court case.	No
St. Maarten	Administrative processes	Sloppy conduct at the registry and violation of confidentiality.	Partly admissible and partly well-founded
	Other	Hearing was done without notice via video link and sound was not good. File was not prepared, judges were biased. Not enough time to tell the story. Impression that not judges but clerk wrote judgment.	Not founded
	Administrative/judicial decisions	Procedural misconduct	Still pending

### 3.4 Recusals

A motion to recuse a judge is a legal mechanism by which a party to a proceeding (such as a defendant or plaintiff) may request, during legal proceedings, that a judge recuse themselves from the case. This occurs when that party believes the judge is not impartial or independent. Recusal may be invoked if there are objective reasons to doubt the judge’s impartiality. A motion to recuse is therefore an essential mechanism for safeguarding the right to a fair and impartial trial, but it must be used carefully and on proper grounds.

In 2025, a total of thirteen recusal requests were filed with the recusal chambers: one in Aruba, two in Bonaire, nine in Curaçao, and one in Sint Maarten.

The challenge in Aruba was declared inadmissible. In Bonaire, one challenge was declared inadmissible and one was rejected. In Curaçao, of the nine challenges, five were declared unfounded, three judges accepted the challenge, and one challenge was declared inadmissible. The challenge in Sint Maarten was also declared inadmissible.

# The Joint Court in development: building a future-proof judicial system

## 4



Since October 10, 2010, when constitutional reforms were implemented within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, much has changed for the judicial system in the Caribbean. With the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles, the organization of the judicial system was also restructured. The Court of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba was replaced by the Joint Court of Justice of Aruba, Curaçao, and Sint Maarten, and of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba. With this new structure, the Court gained greater autonomy and responsibility. At the same time, the workload increased. The number of cases grew, and the complexity of the work also changed, resulting in a significant rise in the workload over the past fifteen years.

Adjudicating cases is not the Court's only responsibility. In addition to hearing cases, the Court oversees professional groups such as notaries, attorneys, and bailiffs. It also plays a role in supervising medical professionals and pharmacists, participates in selection committees for key positions, and maintains registers such as the guardianship register and the insolvency register. In addition, the Court provides training and mentors new candidate judges. A special quality committee has also been established to focus on quality control and process improvement. Greater attention is also being paid to the accessibility of the judicial system. For example, efforts are underway to improve the availability of interpreters so that litigants who speak different languages can fully follow their cases.

These tasks place significant demands on the organization: both in terms of the primary judicial process where judges, court clerks, and support staff ensure the administration of

justice and related services on a daily basis and with regard to the supporting processes such as facilities management, finance, and HR which are handled by the Operations Management Board. The Court is an organization where continuous development and innovation are necessary to ensure the quality of the administration of justice in the future as well.

According to Operations Director Martin Luttge, the Court is currently in the midst of a period of change. "The Court is truly in a transitional phase," he says. "There are many developments happening simultaneously, both in the core process—the administration of justice itself—and in operations." To effectively manage these changes, the organization behind the scenes also needed to be strengthened. The Operations Management Department has now been formalized, improving support and service delivery at each of the locations. This has also placed greater emphasis on strengthening the HR organization. Interim HR Manager Cherissa Koko sees clear progress in this area. "Over the past year, the Hof's HR team has accomplished a great deal," she says. "An interim HR manager has been appointed, and additional support has been established in Aruba with an HR advisor. We have focused on further professionalizing and structuring HR processes, for example regarding onboarding and supporting managers with day-to-day HR issues." "We have invested in a consultation structure so that, every two weeks, we can specifically address HR-related implementation and policy issues with the management of each location. Over the past year, we have made extensive preparations and conducted thorough assessments to make significant progress in the coming

year toward further formalizing our HR policy.” “The Staff Council also plays an increasingly important role within the organization,” emphasizes Luttge. “The Staff Council represents the staff and holds up a mirror to us as the board. This helps us to stay sharp.”

In addition to HR, significant progress is being made in other areas as well. Based on the multi-year strategic plan, the various teams within operations are working toward clear objectives, which are monitored during regular meetings with all managers. By 2025, for example, this plan will have led to significant investments in IT, improvements in procurement processes, and major steps toward further integrating AFAS as the primary software package for all financial and HR processes.

### Challenges remain

At the same time, there are still plenty of challenges on the agenda. Recruiting and retaining staff is one of the biggest. “That’s an issue at all our locations,” says Koko. “We operate in a relatively small labor market, so it’s not always easy to fill vacancies.” Workload also remains a key concern that requires long-term solutions. In addition, challenges related to IT systems and real estate will continue to dominate the agenda in the coming years.

### Investing in staff

According to Luttge and Koko, a key to the future lies in employee development. The Court therefore makes a significant investment in training and career development. Employees are given the opportunity, if they wish, to pursue (advanced) education at the higher professional or university level and to further develop their careers within the organization. In addition, the Court places great value on facilitating exchange programs. For example, court clerks are given the opportunity to gain experience in the Netherlands for a period of time, and employees can be temporarily assigned to other branches, so that teams within the Court learn from one another and jointly improve work processes. Training and courses are also offered to employees through the Court Academy. “We strive to make people more versatile while simultaneously fostering their development. We will continue to take further steps in this direction in the coming years as part of a comprehensive career policy,” says Koko.

To attract new talent, the Court is also investing in visibility. For example, a new website was recently launched featuring a dedicated “Werken bij het Hof” portal. Job postings have been updated, and vacancies are being promoted more actively through social media. The Court also participates in career fairs at its locations and throughout the Netherlands. Additionally, it focuses on internships and initiatives such as

the Caribbean Summer Court, where students and young lawyers can gain exposure to the judicial system in the Caribbean.

### Integrity and organizational culture

In addition to professionalization and growth, integrity remains a key priority within the Court. After all, integrity is an essential pillar of trust in the judiciary and of a professional work environment in which employees feel safe and respected. To ensure this, external confidential advisors have been appointed to whom employees can turn with questions, concerns, or reports regarding inappropriate behavior or integrity issues. Working with external confidential advisors, places extra emphasis on independence and confidentiality, so that employees feel free to discuss situations. In addition, active attention is paid to reporting procedures, and employees are informed about the options for reporting integrity issues. Meetings are also organized in which employees engage in dialogue with one another about integrity, professional standards, and ethical dilemmas. During these meetings, such as the so-called “Integrity Café,” employees have the opportunity to share experiences and reflect together on their professional conduct. These meetings contribute to raising awareness and encourage an open dialogue about integrity within the organization.

### Work with a social impact

According to Luttge and Koko, it is precisely this social significance that makes working at the Court special. “You contribute directly to the administration of justice in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom,” says Koko. “That gives the work meaning.” In addition, employees work in an international and multicultural environment. “You have colleagues from different backgrounds and cultures,” she says. “But ultimately, we’re all working toward the same goal: a fair and accessible justice system.” Although the Court is still in the midst of a period of change, they believe the direction is clear. Step by step, they are building a modern and future-proof organization that continues to support the administration of justice in the Caribbean.

# 5 Finance

The Court is funded by the four countries within the Kingdom for which it handles legal cases. This joint funding is governed by the Kingdom Act on the Joint Court of Justice and the Kingdom Decree on the Financing of the Joint Court of Justice. For the 2025 reporting year, the Court once again received an unqualified audit opinion regarding both accuracy and legality.

## 5.1 2025 Budget

The Kingdom Decree on the Financing of the Joint Court of Justice, *Rijksbesluit Financiering Gemeenschappelijk Hof van Justitie*, sets out the method by which the Court’s budget is established. The budget consists of five components. These five components are:

1. the inflow-related contribution;
2. the contribution for court-related costs;
3. the contribution for the costs of the Management Board;
4. the contribution for housing costs;
5. the contribution for other costs.

The case-load-based contribution to the Court is based on a cost-price model established by law, which forms the basis for the joint funding by the four countries. Pursuant to Article 8 of the Royal Decree on the Financing of the Joint Court of Justice, the cost prices are recalculated and set every three years. For the 2023–2025 budgets, the Court conducted a study based on the principles set forth in this article. This study examined, among other things, the expected caseload, broken down by case category, and developments in salaries and costs related to the handling of these cases. Based on this data, the cost prices for 2023–2025 have been established. The Government Decree stipulates that the established cost prices may thereafter be adjusted only annually in line with general developments in salaries and prices.

Each country’s case-load-based contribution is calculated by multiplying the unit costs (P) by that country’s share of the total number of incoming cases (Q), i.e.,  $P \times Q$ . The budget is discussed and approved by the four Ministers of Justice in the Four-Country Judicial Consultation, *Justitieel Vierlandenoverleg* (JVO). The budget for 2025 per country is structured as follows:

**Table 1 | 2025 Budget**

Draft Budget for 2025					Amounts x Cg 1,000
	Aruba	BES	Curaçao	St. Maarten	Total
Enrollment-related	17,089	3,323	17,855	5,974	44,241
Court costs	260	210	450	150	1,070
Board of Trustees	46	46	46	46	184
Housing costs	0	373	2,335	108	2,816
Other	300	4,714	100	50	5,163
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,694</b>	<b>8,666</b>	<b>20,785</b>	<b>6,328</b>	<b>53,474</b>

The 2025 budget has been prepared based on the new cost prices for the 2023–2025 period. The cost prices (P) are derived from those of 2024, adjusted for general wage and price trends. The average per country over the years 2020–2023 was used as the basis for the expected caseload (Q). Unlike the budgets for 2023 and 2024, the budget for 2025 is not capped at the 2022 level. Nor has it been assumed that a negative result would occur, meaning the budget provides a more realistic picture of expected developments.

## 5.2 2025 Results

When preparing the 2025 financial statements, global developments such as inflation, energy crises, climate change, or geopolitical tensions did not warrant any adjustments. However, these developments—including heightened international tensions—do influence the overall economic climate and lead to price increases that also affect the Court.

The 2025 reporting year closes with a virtually neutral result of Cg -13,000. This is virtually equal to the originally budgeted amount of zero. This slight deviation is primarily attributable to higher-than-expected price increases and reflects the Court’s ongoing commitment to prudent financial management, despite the challenging financial and economic conditions.

The result is charged to the operating reserve, causing the operating reserve to decrease further.

**Table 2 | Statement of income and expenses**

Statement of Income and Expenses for 2025		Amounts x Cg 1,000		
		Budget 2025	Actual figure 2025	Actual figure 2024
Revenue				
	Cost-related contribution	44,241	44,241	40,819
	Contribution toward housing costs	2,816	2,818	2,806
	Contribution toward legal costs	1,070	1,197	1,089
	Contribution from the Management Board	184	184	184
	Other contributions	1,106	2,167	1,000
	Contribution toward the Law Enforcement/TBO Project	4,057	4,012	3,300
	Other revenue and expenses, net	0	-144	-79
<b>Total revenue</b>		<b>53,474</b>	<b>54,475</b>	<b>49,119</b>
Expenses				
	Personnel costs	35,797	35,824	33,501
	Operating costs	9,306	9,690	9,808
	Depreciation costs	1,445	973	1,000
	Interest costs	7	0	0
	Legal costs	1,070	1,197	1,089
	Project costs	500	512	367
	Other costs	1,106	2,167	1,000
	Management Board	184	113	212
	Law Enforcement Project\TBO	4,057	4,012	3,300
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>53,474</b>	<b>54,488</b>	<b>50,277</b>
<b>Net income</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>-1,158</b>

## 5.3 Costs by category

### Personnel costs

In addition to salary costs, this item includes various allowances, benefits, and other employer expenses such as disability insurance, health insurance, medical expenses, and employer pension contributions. Personnel costs are by far the largest expense item compared to the other categories. Total personnel costs have increased by Cg 2,323,000 compared to the year 2024, resulting in a total amount of Cg 35,824,000. This increase is primarily attributable to higher salaries resulting from general salary trends, such as salary indexation and annual pay raises.

**Table 3 | Actual personnel costs for 2025**

Personnel costs										Amounts x Cg 1,000		
	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total			
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	Budget 2025	Difference 2025 %	2024
Salary costs, including allowances	6,733	6,750	750	767	15,173	13,459	2,725	3,544	25,381	26,942	94%	24,520
Bonuses	265	174	26	13	517	377	51	83	859	650	132%	647
Social security contributions	411	470	34	47	865	875	116	184	1,426	1,500	95%	1,576
Pension costs	554	552	46	30	1,716	1,026	117	168	2,433	2,402	101%	1,776
Health insurance costs	326	437	65	86	1,016	1,251	109	128	1,516	1,600	95%	1,902
Temporary staffing costs	576	403	93	81	2,297	1,567	185	191	3,151	1,603	197%	2,242
Other personnel costs	180	151	32	32	805	628	41	27	1,058	1,100	96%	838
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,045</b>	<b>8,937</b>	<b>1,046</b>	<b>1,056</b>	<b>22,389</b>	<b>19,183</b>	<b>3,344</b>	<b>4,325</b>	<b>35,824</b>	<b>35,797</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33,501</b>

In 2025, salary costs will be 6% below the budgeted amount, primarily due to unfilled vacancies. However, this underspending is almost entirely offset by higher costs for temporary staff.

When recruiting, the Court often has to compete with government agencies, law firms, and large companies that offer more attractive employment conditions. This makes it increasingly difficult to attract and retain talented professionals. For critical positions, such as judges and court clerks, the Court is therefore increasingly relying on temporary staff, often seconded from the Netherlands. This leads to higher costs and less continuity, which is reflected in the hiring of staff.

## Operating costs

Total operating costs decreased by Cg 118,000 in 2025, bringing the total to Cg 9,690,000, compared to Cg 9,808,000 in the previous year. This decrease is the result of more effective cost management and increased cost awareness within the organization. Through targeted measures and stricter control over expenditures, we have succeeded in improving operational efficiency without compromising on quality and performance.

**Table 4 | Actual operating costs for 2025**

Operating costs 2025										Amounts x Cg 1,000			
	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total				
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	Budget 2025	Difference 2025%	2024	
Housing costs	0	0	376	278	2,344	2,429	98	98	2,818	2,816	100%	2,805	
Other housing costs	450	476	131	150	1,144	1,202	330	556	2,055	2,550	81%	2,384	
Office expenses	160	247	67	81	319	459	114	149	660	725	91%	936	
Travel and accommodation expenses	305	237	231	171	944	792	324	336	1,804	1,325	136%	1,536	
Documentation and publication costs	16	6	7	9	110	108	2	20	135	130	104%	143	
Other payments to staff	0	0	0	0	150	162	0	0	150	70	214%	162	
Expert and consultant fees	0	0	0	0	19	15	0	0	19	40	48%	15	
In-house and outsourced costs	0	0	0	0	352	426	0	0	352	350	101%	426	
Other operating expenses	216	184	34	40	1,234	1,121	213	56	1,697	1,300	131%	1,401	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,147</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>6,616</b>	<b>6,714</b>	<b>1,081</b>	<b>1,215</b>	<b>9,690</b>	<b>9,306</b>	<b>104%</b>	<b>9,808</b>	

Some cost items exceeded the budget, each for a specific reason:

**Travel and accommodation expenses:** increased due to more travel between locations and from the Netherlands, as a result of the need for temporary additional staff to fill open positions. Rising ticket and hotel prices also contributed to the higher costs.

**Other payments to staff:** these are primarily higher due to relocation costs for newly hired staff. In 2025, the number of relocations between the islands and from the Netherlands was greater than anticipated.

**Other operating expenses:** the overspend in this cost category is primarily due to expenditures for software maintenance, licenses, and software. These additional costs are largely attributable to investments in modernizing and strengthening a reliable and future-proof IT infrastructure. .

## Depreciation Expenses

Each year, the Court invests in property, plant, and equipment, which are capitalized and depreciated in accordance with the applicable methodology over their expected useful lives. In 2025, depreciation expenses were Cg 472,000 lower than budgeted because several major investments were made later in the year, and the costs were therefore not yet fully reflected in the actual results.

**Table 5 | Actual depreciation expenses 2025**

Depreciation expenses 2025										Amounts x Cg 1,000			
	Aruba		BES		Curaçao		St. Maarten		Total				
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	Budget 2025	Difference 2025%	2024	
Renovations	2	2	25	22	144	144	44	42	215	300	72%	210	
Systems and fixtures	113	91	27	26	92	133	49	48	281	500	56%	297	
Automation	138	141	21	24	217	228	42	42	418	550	76%	436	
Other	18	17	13	13	15	19	13	8	59	95	62%	57	
<b>Total</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>973</b>	<b>1,445</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>1,000</b>	

## 5.4 Equity

In accordance with Article 15, paragraph 4 of the Kingdom Decree on the Financing of the Joint Court of Justice, any operating loss is charged to the Court's operating reserve. Pursuant to Article 15, paragraph 1c the result for the year is presented separately within equity as retained earnings.

**Table 6 | Changes in equity 2025**

Equity	Balance x Cg 1,000	
	2025	2024
Operating reserve (balance as of January 1)	1,382	2,540
Changes during the fiscal year:		
- Retained earnings for the fiscal year	-13	-1,158
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,369</b>	<b>1,382</b>

In accordance with the Royal Decree, the Court's equity capital may not exceed the maximum of 10% of the average total contribution over the last three years. If this 10% limit is exceeded, the surplus will be skimmed off and returned to the countries in proportion to the distribution key. The average total contribution over the last three years amounts to Cg 41,193 million. Therefore, equity capital in excess of Cg 4,119 million will be skimmed off. Given the level of equity capital at the end of 2025, namely Cg 1,369 million, no skimming will take place.

## 5.5 Court fees

Court costs are the costs incurred by the Court during or as a result of the hearing of a case brought before it. These costs are reimbursed under an open-ended funding arrangement. This means that the actual costs incurred are reimbursed in full and any surpluses are transferred to the Member States. The budget is determined by a calculation set out in the Royal Decree on the Financing of the Joint Court of Justice, based on historical costs.

**Table 7a | Court costs contribution versus actual figures for 2025**

Court costs: projected vs. actual for 2025	Amounts x Cg 1,000		
	Budget	Actual figure	To be offset
Aruba	260	243	-17
BES	210	189	-21
Curaçao	450	555	105
St. Maarten	150	210	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,070</b>	<b>1,197</b>	<b>127</b>

**Table 7b | Court costs by type for 2025**

Court Costs	Amounts x Cg 1,000	
	2025	2024
Interpreters and translators in civil cases	671	657
Other civil court costs	141	37
Other court costs in criminal cases	385	395
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,197</b>	<b>1,089</b>

Court costs rose by a total of Cg 108,000 in 2025 compared with the previous year. This increase is partly attributable to a change in policy, as a result of which interpreters and translators are being used more frequently in civil and administrative law cases. On the other hand, the increase is linked to higher other court costs in civil cases.

## 5.6 Other costs

Other costs are defined as costs that cannot be financed through the inflow-related contribution. These include costs for mega-cases and costs for additional capacity in the BES islands.

A mega-case is defined as a related criminal case file for which the proceedings at one instance require 30 hearing hours or more, including pro forma hearings, case management hearings, confiscation hearings, and hearings before the examining magistrate. A criminal case involving 30 hearing hours or more is classified as a mega-case and is financed accordingly. A mega-case may occur both at first instance and on appeal.

Due to the size of the case files and the large number of court days, mega-cases require a disproportionately large number of resources. The Court is increasingly dealing with these large and labor-intensive cases, which generally require a great deal of time and additional measures, resulting in extra costs. From a financial standpoint, mega-cases thus place a disproportionately heavy burden on the organization.

**Table 8a | Other costs (mega-cases) budgeted versus actual figures for 2025**

Other costs (major projects): budget vs. actuals for 2025			Amounts x Cg 1,000
	Budget	Actual figure	To be offset
Aruba	50	0	-50
BES	50	0	-50
Curaçao	100	405	305
St. Maarten	50	0	-50
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>155</b>

These costs are reimbursed under the open-ended funding scheme. An annual statement of accounts is drawn up for completed major projects. In this statement, the actual costs are compared with the budget for other costs. Any surpluses or deficits are settled with the relevant country on an annual basis.

The item “Additional Capacity BES” is also included under “Other Costs.” To strengthen the rule of law on Bonaire, Saba, and St. Eustatius, the Minister of Security and Justice in the Netherlands has made funds available for additional capacity during the years 2023, 2024, and 2025, in the amount of Cg 607,000 per year for each year. At the end of 2024, an additional one-time amount of €400,000 was made available to strengthen capacity in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. This amount was used in 2025 to cover these costs.

The Country of Aruba has made additional funds available for the years 2024 and 2025 to cover the costs of additional capacity in connection with the implementation of the new Code of Criminal Procedure. An amount of AWG 271,000 has been allocated for 2024 and AWG 400,000 for 2025.

The total personnel costs for additional capacity in 2025 amount to Cg 1,763,000. The remaining balance of Cg 1,104,000 is reserved to cover personnel costs in 2026.

**Table 8b | Other costs (additional capacity for BES and Aruba) budgeted versus actual figures for 2025**

Bijdrage extra capaciteit BES en AUA	Amounts Cg x1,000	
	2025	2024
Status as of January 1	1,861	938
Contribution	1,006	1,649
Deducted from: costs charged to the budget	-1,762	-726
<b>Remaining to be spent</b>	<b>1,105</b>	<b>1,861</b>

## 5.7 Management Board

The costs incurred by the Management Board are covered by the Management Board's budget. These costs include the costs of meetings and staff.

**Table 9 | Management Board contribution versus actual figures for 2025**

Board of Directors	Amounts x Cg 1,000	
	2025	2024
Contribution	184	184
Expenses	113	212
Personnel expenses	101	98
Entertainment expenses	3	17
Travel and accommodation expenses	6	31
Other expenses	3	66
<b>Result</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>-28</b>

## 5.8 Project to Strengthen Law Enforcement / Anti-Corruption Task Force (TBO)

The Minister of Security and Justice in the Netherlands has launched a project to strengthen law enforcement in the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. This involves a programmatic approach to enhance the fight against cross-border crime, particularly subversion. This means that criminals use legitimate businesses and services for illegal activities. This carries the risk of bribery and extortion of legitimate parties, public officials, and public administration. In this way, criminals undermine the authority of the justice system and erode the norms and values of legitimate parties. This also diminishes the sense of safety and quality of life in society. The Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice has allocated funding for the years 2016 through 2022 to provide additional capacity for the investigation, prosecution, and trial of these criminals.

In recent years, the deployment of this additional capacity has enabled various criminal investigations to be conducted. The capacity has been used to launch new investigations, as well as to conclude both large-scale, long-term investigations and shorter-term investigations.

The criminal investigations concerned crimes with a financial-economic component and involving so-called Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs), civil servants, government-owned corporations, facilitators, or organizations in the public sector. The investigations focused (in addition to corruption) on serious forms of tax fraud, embezzlement of public funds, document forgery, and money laundering. As a result of this approach, convictions were also handed down by the Court of First Instance, against which appeals have generally been filed.

From 2022, the project-based approach has been replaced by a structural, sustainable approach. In addition, the Minister for Security and Justice in the Netherlands has decided to increase the funding allocated to the counter-subversion strategy. The additional resources will be distributed annually among the various agencies via a phased implementation model. The total contribution for the Court in 2025 is Cg 5,260,000, of which Cg 4,012,000 was spent in 2025.

**Table 10 | Budgeted versus actual figures for the Law Enforcement/TBO Project by year**

Project law enforcement / TBO 2025	Amounts x Cg 1,000	
	2025	2024
Balance as of January 1	2,606	2,397
Contributions received	5,260	3,509
Project expenses	-4,012	-3,300
<b>Balance as of December 31 (Remaining funds)</b>	<b>3,854</b>	<b>2,606</b>

he balance of Cg 3,854,000 as of the end of 2025 is the result of underspending in previous years. The Ministry of Security and Justice has confirmed that the balance will remain available to the Court to cover costs related to the counter-subversion strategy.

## 5.9 Funds managed by the Court

### Third-party funds

The Court holds third-party funds from various countries and third parties as part of the judicial process. These funds can primarily be divided into security deposits, receipts for payments to experts, and funds derived from seizures. These third-party funds are held in custody by the Court until the relevant legal proceedings have been concluded. These funds do not belong to the Court and are therefore not included in the financial statements. The Court has issued a separate engagement to the external auditor to perform a number of specific agreed-upon procedures annually regarding the administration of third-party funds. The Court’s external auditor has fully completed the audits of the third-party funds through the year 2024 and has reported on them. The final approval of the reports is currently underway, and they will be shared shortly. The countries will be informed separately about the results of the aforementioned agreed-upon procedures performed by the external auditor.

**Table 11 | hird-party funds managed by the Court in 2025**

Third-party funds held by the Court	<i>Amounts x Cg 1,000</i>	
	31-12-2025	31-12-2024
Aruba	5,175	5,608
BES	123	892
Curaçao	8,844	7,125
St. Maarten	10,458	10,249
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,600</b>	<b>23,874</b>

### Court fees

When petitions are filed with the Court of First Instance or the Court of Justice at the separate branches of the Common Court of Justice, court fees are due. The amount of the court fees is set forth in the national decree regulating the rates of court costs in civil matters. The individual courts collect the court fees and periodically remit them to the respective countries. The Court’s external auditor has fully completed the audits of court fees for the years up to and including 2022 for all countries and has reported on them. The audits of court fees for the years 2023 through 2025 for all countries will be completed or conducted in the course of 2026. The countries will be informed separately of the results of these audits.

The overview below shows the total amount of court fees under the Court’s administration, broken down by country.

**Table 12 | Court fees managed by the Court in 2025**

Court fees administered by the court	<i>Amounts x Cg 1,000</i>	
	31-12-2025	31-12-2024
Aruba	4,807	3,775
BES	1,446	1,242
Curaçao	6,458	4,852
St. Maarten	3,559	3,191
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,270</b>	<b>13,060</b>

## 5.10 Multi-year strategic plan

The 2025–2028 Multi-year strategic plan includes projects and investments aimed at strengthening the internal organization, ensuring the continuity of the administration of justice, improving the quality of services, and mitigating risks. The goal is to make the Court even more future-proof—a Court that can respond to the changing needs of society and technological developments. With this multi-year plan, the Court provides direction for these developments and focuses on strengthening the organization, ensuring the continuity of the administration of justice, improving the quality of services, and managing risks.

The year 2025 can be characterized as a transitional year. During this year, the strategic decisions made earlier were further developed, and their implementation began. The implementation of these plans depends on the available financial resources. Due to the ongoing financial and economic pressure on the countries, the Court's budgets have been limited in recent years, causing necessary investments to be repeatedly postponed. Some of these investments have now become unavoidable.

In this context, priority is given to three essential organizational changes:

1. A quantitatively and qualitatively robust staffing structure.
2. A modern and competitive salary structure.
3. Secure and robust IT infrastructure and digitization.

### 1. A quantitatively and qualitatively robust staffing structure

When the Court was established as an independent entity, no analysis was conducted to determine whether the organization was sufficiently equipped—in terms of structure, personnel, and resources—to carry out its duties. A thorough investigation shows that the Court requires additional capacity to fully perform its statutory duties, properly supervise staff, and ensure the quality of its judicial decisions. The increasing number of complex cases is leading to high workloads, long workweeks, and a risk of absenteeism, turnover, and delays. Strengthening the staffing structure is essential to ensure continuity, quality, and professional development within the Court.

### 2. A modern and competitive salary structure

With the exception of a few index adjustments, the salary structure has not been updated since 2010. This makes it difficult to attract and retain talented professionals, as the Court must compete with law firms, large corporations, and government organizations that offer better employment conditions. For crucial positions, such as judges and court clerks, temporary staff are therefore increasingly being deployed, often seconded from the Netherlands. This leads to higher costs, reduced continuity, and an imbalance in the salary structure. It is therefore urgently necessary to update the terms of employment to better align with the modern demands of the labor market.

### 3. Secure and robust IT infrastructure and digitalization

The Court manages sensitive legal and personal data, making a well-secured digital environment essential to prevent data breaches, data theft, and system failures, especially given the growing threat of cyberattacks. At the same time, digitization and automation make processes faster and less prone to errors, reduce the workload, and increase efficiency. By making data centrally and structurally accessible, the Court can better analyze, substantiate decisions, and proactively respond to changes.

Due to limited financial resources, these necessary investments could not be carried out in recent years, making the urgency undeniable. The funding requirements arising from the multi-year plan have been fully incorporated into the Cost Model 2026–2028 and the corresponding budgets. With these resources, the Court can make the necessary investments and thus ensure the continuity, quality, and future-proofing of the administration of justice.

## Colophon

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