



Ludmila N.L. de Weever

Member of the Parliament of Sint Maarten

To: Honorable Minister of Finance Marinka Gumbs
Government of Sint Maarten

Subject: Urgent Clarification on TELEM's Financial Support

Dear Minister Gumbs,

I write to you with serious concerns regarding the financial health of our national telecommunications provider TELEM and the level of support it requires from government to stabilize operations.

Recent reports confirm that a government guarantee of XCG 5 million is necessary to support TELEM and to accommodate that request, a quick scan was completed on behalf of the government. St. Maarten Communications Union (SMCU) has also warned of TELEM's fragile financial position which is exacerbated by the threat of increased competition particularly with the entry of Starlink and the consequences of years of mismanagement and no proper oversight and accountability. Given this context I kindly request clarification on the following:

1. **Financial Injection:** Is the government proceeding with a financial injection into TELEM and if so when will this be made available? According to my understanding, without this financial injection, the employees who were made redundant will not receive their agreed upon salaries from Vidanova. This amount is approximately XCG 500,000 per month.
2. **Amount and Structure:** If the financial injection is via the means of a guarantee letter from government to the lenders, what is the amount and what activities is this specified for (ie detailed breakdown of the value to be used for what exact purpose)?
3. **Safeguards:** What oversight and accountability measures will be attached to this support to ensure proper use of public funds and safeguard long term sustainability of TELEM? Specifically, how will government measure deliverables from management and the supervisory board of directors once the financial injection is approved.
4. **Conditions:** As part of the conditions of receiving the financial injection, will TELEM be required to source labor/technicians locally first before inquiring abroad? This is also a concern from the SMCU as TELEM used foreign labor after the restructuring in 2023 which resulted in underutilization of a local workforce (including technicians made redundant).
5. What is the government's position on whether the country should continue to maintain its own telecommunication network? This is especially valid given that the Minister of TEATT authorized Starlink as another telecommunication provider.
6. Please provide a copy of the Quick Scan and the most recent audited financial statements of TELEM which can be confidentially viewed if necessary.

The people of Sint Maarten depend on TELEM as a national asset, and it is therefore essential that Parliament be fully informed of government's plans, commitments and safeguards regarding this matter.

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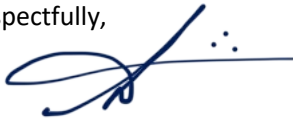
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Lastly, I would like to bring to your attention that should government fail to assist TELEM, the burden of financing the redundant employees at XCG 500,000 per month (for 74 employees) will most certainly be increased by the remaining employees' salaries. A rough estimate of the salaries of the remaining 53 employees could surpass XCG 300,000 per month. Is the government prepared to explain to the former and current employees of TELEM that they will no longer be paid? The burden will then become the government's which undoubtedly will exceed the costs of a guarantee letter in the amount of XCG 5 million.

I look forward to your urgent response.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'L' and 'W' followed by a horizontal line and three dots.

Ludmila de Weever

cc: Prime Minister Dr. Luc Mercelina
Minister of TEATT Grisha Heyliger-Marten
Secretary General Cassandra Janssen