

Testing and Quarantine on Statia.

Proposal to abolish the requirement of a Antigen quick test for entering Statia. 23-03-2021

Current situation

Since the introduction in January 2021 people entering Statia from high risk country need to be in the possession of a NAAT test and an antigen quick test according to the Tijdelijke regeling maatregelen covid-19 Sint Eustatius. From the 27th of February this policy will also include Aruba and Bonaire, Which defacto makes that only from Sint Maarten admittance is possible with one PCR-test only.

ON the Island we have an entry policy in place. Based on this entry policy this implies that everyone coming from a high risk country goes into quarantine for a period of 10 days upon arrival (not a quarantine advice but an obligatory quarantine which is checked by a security company and to which people have to adhere as they agree on it by entering Statia.)

At the end of the 10 days of quarantine they are tested with an antigen quick test and allowed to end the quarantine upon receiving a negative test result.

Motivation for the quick test

The quick test was introduced to mitigate the impact of the new more contagious variant in the European Netherlands. This was done as people could enter the European Netherland without obligatory quarantine and only with a PCR test done within 72 hours before arrival. The quick test was meant to minimize the amount of positive cases entering the Netherlands , also knowing that not everyone goes into quarantine.

At that moment the test was , as part of uniformity in policy also introduced in the Caribbean part of the Netherlands. While de facto for Statia their was already a barrier for the entering of positive cases on the Island through the mandatory quarantine and the exit testing.

In the draft law “quarantaine plicht “(draft March 2021) is stated: “Ten tweede wordt met het wetsvoorstel voorzien in een algemene plicht tot thuisquarantaine voor reizigers die in een hoog risicogebied hebben verbleven. De quarantaineplicht zal in beginsel vervangend zijn ten opzichte van de sneltest. De dubbele testverplichting zal voor de reizigers voor wie dit nu geldt, in beginsel dus komen te vervallen bij inwerkingtreding van dit wetsvoorstel.”

As there is effectively a mandatory quarantine for Statia, there is in line with this draft as no need for a quick test on Statia to achieve a high level of protection.

Future developments/easing of the measures.

Statia will starting the 11th of Aril ease the entry measures for vaccinated persons. The won't have to quarantine anymore and get in stead after entry a behavioral advice which needs to be signed by the persons upon entering Statia) and will be tested 5 days after arrival. This system still has three mitigation measures (1. Pcr testing before entering, 2. Vaccination of the person, 3. Testing after 5 days upon entry) which will also be an effective set of measure to mitigate the introduction of the virus. Besides this non-vaccinated persons will still have to go into quarantine for a period of 10 days with an exit test.

Conclusion

An antigen quick test is not needed in the Statia context as the other measures taken have enough assurance that the risk of introducing the COVID-19 virus on Statia is minimized.