

2.14 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Chief Minister regarding the role of Back-Benchers in formulating policy with respect to external affairs:

What role, if any, does the Minister see for Back-Benchers in formulating policy with respect to external affairs?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur (The Chief Minister):

Under Article 18 of the States of Jersey Law 2005 one of the functions of the Council of Ministers is to discuss and agree their policy regarding external relations, and one of the responsibilities of the Chief Minister is to conduct external relations in accordance with common policy agreed by the Council. However, under our Ministerial system of government, non-executive Members of States also have an important contribution to make in the formation and critical review of external relations policy through the Scrutiny process and, indeed, by asking questions in the debate in the States. For example, Members have had the opportunity to debate and modify the external relations policy set out in the States Strategic Plan, which is the framework within which the Council of Ministers must operate. Members should also be aware that I periodically publish a progress report to the States on international conventions and agreements relevant to Jersey so that all States Members including Back-Benchers are informed of developments and have the opportunity to raise any related matters.

2.14.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Chief Minister not accept that this is a very fast-moving area? It was traditionally not given the prominence it should have been given. Now that we are being placed under enormous pressure externally, we have to be much more proactive. Will he promise to publish immediately a progress report drawing attention to the main policy developments in this area so that Members can reflect upon this more carefully rather than just a list of conventions which is a rather sterile way of dealing with the issue?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

Yes, I certainly agree it is a fast-moving area and that we have to be more proactive, and we are being more proactive. As to publishing immediately something happens, I hesitate to give that blanket assurance, but I do accept the fact that simply producing 6 monthly reports of conventions and agreements is a bit sterile. If we can improve that process, I am happy to discuss with the Deputy how that might be achieved.