

2019.10.08

## **5 Deputy K.F. Morel of the Minister for External Relations regarding the Guide to Preparing for Brexit: (OQ.226/2019)**

Is the *Guide to Preparing for Brexit*, that was recently distributed to households in the Island, only being provided in English? If not, will the Minister detail the other options and languages available to non-English readers?

### **Senator I.J. Gorst (The Minister for External Relations):**

The *Guide to Preparing for No-Deal Brexit* has been distributed to all Jersey households in English; this is because we cannot easily differentiate between the native language spoken in each household when delivering a flier. In addition, translations of the guide are being produced in Portuguese and Polish and will be uploaded to the gov.je website as well as provided to Government officials in the Customer and Local Services Centre and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

#### **4.5.1 Deputy K.F. Morel:**

On the guide itself, there is a small part in English, which says: "Please use Google Translate to translate this document." Does the Minister accept the absurdity of writing in English instructions to use a computer programme, which many people may not have access to, depending on their own computer literacy capabilities, does he see the absurdity in that situation?

### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

Absolutely not. It is a common approach to a cost-effective and reasonably accurate way of providing translation services, as the Deputy will know. It is used around the globe these days. As I said, there will be Portuguese and Polish versions uploaded and there will be also a small number of hard copies of those versions printed and available at those sites that I just mentioned.

#### **4.5.2 Deputy M. Tadier:**

I understand the relative complexity of this area, but would it not have been a wise idea to at least have had a small box on the printed version that went to every house in the 4 main minority languages perhaps of Portuguese, Polish, Romanian and French, in the Island, which says that: "If you are affected by any of these issues and if you have queries, for example, about the settlement scheme [in that language] then you can visit this website and you can get more information." Was that perhaps an omission in hindsight?

### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

Hindsight is always available to us to improve, perhaps, what we have done in the past. Whenever one is communicating, one can, after the event, always think of improvements that might have been made. But let us remember the E.U. (European Union) Settled Status Scheme is available in all 27 languages on the Government website, so that largely deals with the Deputy's question. We will all have different opinions about exactly how something should have been worded, or the typeset, or the approach that we might have taken to language.

#### **4.5.3 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Are there any ads taken out with the Government Communications Unit on social media to target different minority language groups in their own language with, as I have said, targeted online adverts and, if not, why not?

### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I assume the Deputy meant to refer that question to the Chief Minister, who is responsible for the Communications Unit, unless he was specifically referring to Brexit.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

I was specifically referring to Brexit and with the general presumption that we have a OneGov system in place, where silo mentalities are supposed to be broken down, but I may be wrong.

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

As the Deputy well knows, he would not wish to be held responsible for the actions of this Government, or any previous Government that he might have been a part of. We have taken out adverts in other languages during the course of the last 3 years when it comes to Brexit. If the Deputy is asking us to consider whether now might be a good stage to do that again, of course, we are very prepared to consider that.

**4.5.4 Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour:**

I only just rise to ask the Minister was he aware that with the organ donation scheme that was launched a few months ago, a leaflet was produced in Portuguese and Polish and distributed and just maybe there is a bit of synergy going forward for future projects where we are reaching out to wider aspects of our community about big moments in our society.

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I have already answered that, in hindsight, there are always improvements that one could have made but, for my part, the officials that drafted that document and worked on that document, it is clear, it is concise, it provides the relevant information and it also signposts to those who perhaps English is not their first language.

**4.5.5 Deputy K.F. Morel:**

It is clear and it is concise, as long as you speak English, otherwise it is gobbledygook. Would the Minister accept that, as he has a 30-strong communications team at his disposal, hindsight should not be necessary on this occasion, they are there precisely to do the job of ensuring that people are communicated to. In this case, does the Minister accept that it is the most vulnerable people who are not receiving the communications that they should be, because they have not been translated into their languages?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I can give the polite parliamentary answer to that question; sometimes it is a little frustrating that the communications team, who are hardworking - the individual who has led the particular team that produced this document works 24/7, so he worked all last weekend and they do a first-class job.

**[Approbation]** Certainly, on my part, when it comes to Brexit and it comes to External Relations, other Ministers can answer on their part for the work that they have undertaken and it is a little bit disappointing that Members of this Assembly choose to take side shots at them when they cannot answer for themselves. With hindsight, of course, we can always make improvements; that is not something that we should be criticised for, so I am a little bit surprised that they Deputy would take that course in regard to these Brexit leaflets and particularly in regard to the work that my officials have done in communicating with Islanders, which we now see is copied and mirrored in the United Kingdom and in our fellow Crown Dependencies. So, if he is wishing to take a target at Government staff, perhaps he should move his sights slightly.