

20.10.20

8 Deputy K.F. Morel of the Chief Minister regarding engagement with minority groups in Jersey (OQ.263/2020):

Given that 3 per cent of those responding to the recent survey regarding Islanders' opinions of the Government's priorities in light of the COVID-19 pandemic stated that they are Madeiran or Portuguese, and 2 per cent stated that they are Polish, what action is the Government taking to ensure that future surveys reach, and are responded to by, minority groups in Jersey?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré (The Chief Minister):

The Council of Ministers values the input of our immigrant communities into the development of the Government Plan and policy generally through our consultations. What I would just note before getting to answering the rest of the Deputy's question is obviously the 5 per cent referred to by the Deputy represents around 102 responses. In total we had around 263 responses, i.e. around 13 per cent of those responding from what is described as non-Jersey, non-U.K., non-Republic of Ireland and non-Crown Dependencies. That is out of about 2,100. Proportionately from the last census this will have changed, and we will see more next year when the new census comes out; the last census indicated we had about 7 per cent Portuguese and Madeira of origin and around 3 per cent of Polish. So that just puts those numbers that he is citing into context and the Polish looked broadly representative based on the last survey obviously. Obviously the Madeira and Portuguese is lower, but it is still a reasonable number in absolute terms. The gov.je website does provide a translation services that ensures that content is available in multiple languages but the use of that is somewhat limited. The reality these days is that many users set their operating system and browser languages to their preferred language or use browser extensions to control the language they read content in. That means that they can read both promotional posts about our surveys and the surveys themselves in their preferred language. But we do continue to develop communications in non-English languages for key Government campaigns. That has taken place at present both for the Jersey E.U. (European Union) Settlement Scheme and the recently launched domestic abuse campaign which includes communications in Polish, Portuguese, Romanian and Thai.

4.8.1 Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am pleased to hear the Chief Minister accept that Madeira and Portuguese population's responses are not representative in terms of the size, 3 per cent and 7 per cent are not the same thing. With that in mind, and notwithstanding all that the Minister has just said about how the Government speaks outwardly in different languages, does the Minister accept that the Government does not often hear the voices of the Madeiran and Portuguese population in Jersey?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

As I said, I think the fact that overall we have had a 13 per cent response I thought was pretty good; the 263 respondents from non-English speaking or likely to be non-English speaking countries. I think there is quite a lot of attempt to do engagement, particularly with the communities that he has talked about. I know that I have - well it obviously did not happen this year - certainly attended a number of Madeiran or Portuguese events during my time as Chief Minister, so I would have thought the engagement was reasonable. We know we can always do better; there is no question on that. Obviously the other issue is you can reach out as much as you like but you cannot force people to respond. That can come down to the whole issue around apathy that we face in a whole range of areas. But I think the fact that around 263 - and I accept I am using the totality - of about

2,100 responses were, as I said, from what is sometimes defined as “other countries” is not something we should ignore. But we know we can always do better.

4.8.2 Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour:

Can I ask the Chief Minister, of those groups already mentioned does the Minister agree with me that even within those groups they are not homogenous and you will have a spectrum of opinion?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Yes.

4.8.3 Deputy K.F. Morel:

Given the Chief Minister’s response to the last question, and in accepting that there is no homogenous single voice of any given community in Jersey, does he accept that is the reason why it is very important that numerically rather than statistically such surveys reach out to a representative sample of all the communities in the Island?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

I think we always do our best to make sure we get the broadest opinions of all Islanders. As I said, we do make efforts to deal with what is sometimes referred to as minorities and we are making, I think, quite different efforts to reach out to certain members of our community. What you cannot do is oblige them to respond, and that in itself will distort the responses. But, as I said, 13 per cent of the responses are from what is deemed other countries and it can always be improved but that is not a bad start.