

23.11.28.

2 The Connétable of St. Martin of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding online safety (OQ.225/2023)

I believe the Assistant Minister is answering this question. In relation to the U.K. (United Kingdom) Online Safety Act, and in light of the Government's decisions to decline a permissive extent clause, will the Minister advise what discussions, if any, are taking place between the Government and the U.K. Government to provide similar protection to Islanders, including the online regulation of the largest and highest risk services and offences?

Deputy A. Curtis of St. Clement (Assistant Minister for Sustainable Economic Development - rapporteur):

Discussions with the U.K. have been limited to the original decision as to whether or not to include a P.E.C. or permissive extent clause in the Online Safety Bill. We are working closely with Justice and Home Affairs to ensure new and relevant criminal offences such as those contained in the U.K. bill in our legislation, and we will do so with such amendments alongside any recommendations being adopted and followed from the Violence Against Women and Girls Task Force report.

3.8.1 The Connétable of St. Martin.

I think the Assistant Minister has answered me quite well. The permissive extent clause would enable the relevant provisions of the Bill to be extended to Jersey should the States decide this is desirable in future. I am pleased to hear what the Assistant Minister said but I would just like him to assure the Assembly that Jersey does not fall behind Guernsey, the U.K. or the E.U. (European Union)?

Deputy A. Curtis:

I thank the Connétable for her question and for highlighting that the U.K. is not the only place that is legislating and regulating in this area. I can confirm that the team is looking into the area of regulation as well as criminal offence. This is an area that is rapidly evolving and at the time of the offering of a permissive extent clause, both the Minister and I, on advice and consultation with law officers, felt the correct decision was not to include one. That is not to say we are not actively pursuing investigations into both the criminal and regulatory side, looking at what the U.K. is implementing, the E.U. and further afield to make sure we have the right regulation for Island citizens.