

2024.04.30

3.9 Deputy I. Gardiner of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding the pilot scheme for French Nationals travelling to Jersey (OQ.72/2024)

Will the Minister advise what progress, if any, has been made in extending the pilot scheme allowing French nationals to travel to Jersey using a French national identity card, to stay in Jersey for up to 3 days?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat (The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs):

I thank the Deputy for the question. The French Day Trip Scheme which was launched in 2023 has been very successful with approximately 49,800 day trips from France to Jersey and 17,600 of those trips, as in 35 per cent, was where travellers used the I.D. (Identification) card. It is aligned with the new Council of Ministers' commitment to develop the visitor economy and our links with our French neighbours, but we are also part of the Common Travel Area, which is a responsibility that we share. Together with Customs and Immigration I have explored options to expand the existing day trip scheme; however, there is significant security and operational risks that cannot satisfactorily be mitigated and I do not, therefore, envisage that the scheme will be widened to allow visits of up to 3 days. I will keep this under review but can confirm the existing arrangements for the day trips will continue until the end of September.

3.9.1 Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank the Minister for her response. I completely agree that we need to assess the risks; we all know about the risks. We also need to consider how we do manage the risk. Would the Minister advise how many discussions or emails she personally had with her counterpart at Westminster for discussions to maintain or expand the possible schemes and discussion about the risks?

[10:45]

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

In relation to Westminster, there have been 2 letters, which were received previously, which both raised concerns in relation to not only the day trip but extending it further beyond what was already the case. There is continuing work by the Immigration Department to see what we are going to be able to achieve when, at the latter part of this year, we introduce an Electronic Travel Authority because obviously at the moment our biggest want would be to be able to continue with the 24-hour day trip. Therefore, that is a priority at this stage and that is ongoing work that Customs and Immigration have had with that department. Personally I have had no direct contact with Westminster but there are 2 letters, one from a previous Minister from Westminster and one from a current one, raising concerns in relation to this particular project.

The Bailiff:

Very well, we come to question 9 that Deputy ... I am sorry, Deputy Bailhache, were you looking to ask ...

Deputy P.M. Bailhache of St. Clement:

I am sorry, had you closed the previous question, Sir?

The Bailiff:

Yes, normally if there is no one indicating a desire to ask, then I move and close, I am sorry.