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Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Review Hearing

Witness: The Minister for External Relations

Wednesday, 11th February 2026

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Panel:

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade (Chair)

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South

Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North

Witnesses:

Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter, The Minister for External Relations

Deputy E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity, Assistant Minister for External Relations

Ms. K. Nutt, Chief Officer, External Relations

Mr. R. Le Feuvre, Director, External Relations

Ms. H. de la Cour, Director, Financial and Professional Services

Ms. C. O'Brien, Deputy Comptroller of Revenue

Mr. D. Marcos, Head of International Compliance

[9:31]

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade (Chair):

Ministers and team, good morning. Thank you for coming in. This is a hearing of the economic international affairs scrutiny panel. I will introduce our side of the table and then I will let you do the same for yours. I am Deputy Montfort Tadier, I am the Chair of the panel.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South:
I am Deputy Porée, a panel member.

Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North:
I am Deputy Max Andrews.

Deputy M. Tadier:
We have got apologies from Deputy Wilson.

The Minister for External Relations:
Thank you. I am Ian Gorst, Minister for External Relations.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:
Elaine Millar, Assistant Minister for External Relations.

Director, Financial and Professional Services:
Helen de la Cour, Director of Financial and Professional Services.

Director, External Relations:
Tom Le Feuvre, Director of External Relations.

Deputy Comptroller of Revenue:
Cora O'Brien, Deputy Comptroller of Revenue.

Chief Officer, External Relations:
Kate Nutt, Chief Officer, External Relations.

Head of International Compliance:
Dan Marcos, Head of International Compliance.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Thank you, all. Minister, before we get into some of maybe the more technical questions, could I just ask you - perhaps as this is, I think, the last quarterly hearing of our term - to give us an overview, first of all, of the things that you are pleased that you have achieved as a team together in this term,

and then I will ask you about anything that you think has fallen off the table, so to speak, or that you still think will need further work?

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, I am pleased to do that. We have done a lot of work on the External Relations side in building and strengthening our relationships in Brussels and in London, particularly in regard to seeking to work to overcome the friction that Brexit delivered with the reset. We have got good relations, I think, on all fronts there. Of course, that reset is not yet fully negotiated. There is a heads of terms, as it were, but we are included there and we working with them on that, which can only be a positive thing. That will continue to work throughout the course of this year. We, of course … one of the good things that we have done over the last 2 years has managed to sign a D.T.A. (Double Taxation Agreement) with Bahrain, but you have asked me some questions about that in writing. We have also strengthened our relationship, I think, in the U.S.A. (United States of America), where we know that that is an important market on a number of fronts. During the course of these 2 years as well, we have engaged extensively with U.S. (United States) firms around our Pillar Two offering and that has been incredibly well received. Even though we know that the side-by-side arrangements have changed that landscape, the work that we did around that was incredibly well received and I think it is something that Jersey can be proud of. We have done a lot of work trying to understand the changing global financial services landscape and what that means for Jersey with all of our competitiveness work, that will hopefully be brought to a conclusion from the report side before the election but what that will mean is that there is a lot of work for the incoming Government to do to respond to those global changes in regard to competitiveness.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Some of those areas we will go into more detail with our question plan so we do appreciate the overview. Could I ask specifically about the reset of the relationship with the eurozone and Europe more generally post Brexit. When you say the reset, are we trying to reset Jersey's relationship specifically with the E.U. (European Union) and to what extent is that tied with the U.K.'s (United Kingdom) approach to their relationship?

The Minister for External Relations:

I think generally speaking when we think about the word "reset" or use of the word "reset", we are directly thinking about the reset of the relationship between the United Kingdom and its dependent territories. So that is the main thing. But the reality is that we have also really, I think, had a positive reset in our direct relationship with Brussels and Commissioners and the Commission per se. I think it is twofold really.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Okay, thank you. Anything else to add from the Assistant Minister?

Assistant Minister for External Relations:
No, I think that is a very good summary of what has happened.

Deputy M. Tadier:
I suppose the last part of the question was really to do with, have there been any frustrations - I do not mean general - just specifically in your department in terms of what you have maybe not being able to get over the line, what do you think needs more work in the future?

The Minister for External Relations:
I think it is a good question. The only area where I wish it would have been nice to make more progress, but it is not directly within our gift, is being included for services in the U.K.'s free trade agreement arrangement. We are making progress there. The U.K. now, I think, has a really good grasp of why that is positive, not only for us but for them, from a foreign direct investment perspective. Also, any new Government, as we saw in the U.K., does not always want to take the decisions of the previous Government, they want to do their own work again and have a look at it again. I am pleased that that now has concluded as well. They see no reason why we should not be included for services and therefore they are more empowered to make that case. We are not yet there, we might be there before the election but it is difficult to … the U.K. has had its own political difficulties and therefore is not necessarily focusing on some of these big areas. That is an area where we are still making progress but we are not quite there.

Assistant Minister for External Relations:
I was going to say the other thing you probably should just remember is the MONEYVAL report and just how very strong that was, which of course has led to more work, but I think that was undeniably a very good result for Jersey and the financial services industry. We should remember that as a success at this time.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Okay, thank you. We will move on to some perhaps more technical questions I will call them. The first one relates specifically to the Draft Sanctions and Asset-Freezing Law (Jersey) Amendment to the regulations which, just to confirm, has been lodged already. When is that due for debate?

Head of International Compliance:
The 10th, I think.

Deputy M. Tadier:

10th March. We have had a briefing on this, by the way, but there is a public element to ask these questions as well. Minister, can you clarify the criteria used to determine when alignment is appropriate versus when Jersey should be maintaining a divergent approach?

The Minister for External Relations:
Well, as we know, sanctions are a foreign policy tool. The U.K. is, as a matter of international law, responsible for our foreign relations and therefore when it comes to sanctions it is absolutely appropriate that we align with the United Kingdom, and these amendments mean that we continue to do that. They are largely amendments which mean that we will continue to align with them. It would not be appropriate for Jersey to be a backdoor for any sort of U.K. sanctions evasion. As you know, in our law we follow U.K. sanctions and U.N. sanctions, but this has been particularly important in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the war there.

Deputy M. Tadier:
There is a regulation 3 in what is being proposed here and, essentially, if I understand it correctly, regulation 3 is to broaden the reporting requirement for designated persons. Just so we know for the listening public, I suppose, could you just remind us what a designated person is under the under this law?

The Minister for External Relations:
Well, I suppose, it is as described. They are designated, which means they are subject of a sanction and this law really does 3 things, so it clarifies the meaning of making available indirectly to or for the benefit of a designated person - that is somebody who is subject to sanction - to make it clear beyond any doubt that funds or economic resources are not to be made available to any entities owned, held or controlled by that designated person as well as to the designated person themselves.

Deputy M. Tadier:
This puts a further requirement, which does not currently exist in Jersey, that if it is not a direct client of yours or somebody that is within the direct orbit of your business dealings that you are still required to report that, is that correct?

The Minister for External Relations:
Yes, so there are a number … there are largely 3 amendments and that is not the one that I have just answered your question to. That is the one about disclosure around the information that you might come across. So currently the disclosure is a direct connection. If you were operating an account of a designated person or you suspected that there was a transaction connected with your organisation, you would do that. What this does is just slightly broaden that out and say, you might, in the ordinary course of your business as a financial services company, come across accounts held

elsewhere or actions being undertaken elsewhere that you think: "Oh, that could be a designated person" it is saying you should report that as well. That really, I think, is quite important, even though it is a small amendment, because it does mean that we can have even more confidence than we have already got - and I think we have got a high degree of confidence - that we are having reported to us transactions, accounts and things like that in an appropriate way. But it just slightly extends it. We have been out to consultation with that. The J.F.S.C. (Jersey Financial Services Commission) are aware of it and supportive of it.

Deputy M. Tadier:

How long have you been aware of that, let us call it a legislative gap in this area?

The Minister for External Relations:

Well, I am not sure we could even call it a legislative gap. I think it is just a strengthening of our legislation and, as you mentioned at the top of your questions, it brings us in in line with U.K. and international partners. There has not been anything to stop firms already doing this and some have been doing it. This just makes it clear that actually it is a good thing for everybody to be thinking in this way.

Deputy M. Tadier:

During the consultation process, this was generally not seen as having any adverse impact on companies?

The Minister for External Relations:

I think it was largely neutral. I think there was one consultee that maybe grumbled a bit about it, but there was also one consultee that thought it was an important and good change.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Okay. One of the questions that will probably be a theme through some of these more general questions is about how you decide what the balance is between compliance and best practice, and meeting … whether it is U.K. or international best practice versus Government's more general commitment not to add red tape to various sectors. How do you apply that test?

The Minister for External Relations:

I think it is a very good question and I think it is a question and a test that has not always been used in the past. To my mind, it is absolutely clear that with something like sanctions, it is appropriate to be following, as you asked me at the start, the U.K. approach because of the constitutional position and the desire not to be seen to be in any way helping to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Therefore, I think it is quite a straightforward test, we are just following the U.K. approach. The

broader question, of course, is where in regulation do we take the international standard - if it is A.M.L./C.F.T. (Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism) then we are looking at the F.A.T.F. (Financial Action Task Force) standard - and are we going above and beyond what the standard requires. So meeting the standard is absolutely fine, we continue to aspire to doing that.
[9:45]

The question is always have we gold-plated it domestically on top of that and added extra compliance in that regard. That is not what we are doing with the Draft Sanctions and Asset-Freezing Law nor with any of the amendments that we have currently got before the panel or the Assembly, but that is a theme that we have been … in our competitiveness work, Helen and her team have been at the forefront of this, and Tom as well, in thinking about what is our regulatory answer to the question that you have just raised. Because it has become apparent to me that there is a correlation between making sure you are just meeting the standard and not adding any extra red tape or bureaucracy, and having an economy that is growing.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Okay. I presume sometimes it is also anticipating what is coming down the line, so you do not have to keep making changes and trying to be future ready, right?

The Minister for External Relations:
Well, that is a good question, because if you take the F.A.T.F. requirements on recommendation, the way that you are being assessed about them is always changing. On the one hand, you can be ready. On the other hand, it is going to change anyway so you have to respond to that between the stages of review. Yes, we follow closely, and Helen goes out to Paris or wherever it is, to these plenaries. I am sure they are terribly exciting but, as I said, we follow that, we have a head of delegation also in Jersey that goes and we adjust as we go, but we are mindful at the heart of that adjustment, probably in a way that we maybe have not been previously because of the changing international agenda around financial services that we have got to get that balance right.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Thank you. I will pass over to Deputy Andrews.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Thank you, Chair. Thank you for your attendance today, Minister. I am going to move on to the Draft Director Disqualifications Sanctions (Jersey) Amendment, and that is covering the Companies (Jersey) Law 1991 and the Limited Liability Companies (Jersey) Law 2018 as well. I just really

wanted to have a broader understanding of why the rationale to bring about these changes has been proposed and how it can take effect and improve things?

The Minister for External Relations:

In effect, this is just making … if this is the one we are talking about, making an amendment to repoint at the order.

Head of International Compliance:

For the licensing provisions, yes.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, so it is just correcting something that I suppose, in a way, slipped through the net when we made these changes previously. So re-pointing back to it to make sure that it is absolutely clear.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes. Obviously this is to do with director disqualification sanctions.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

In the report there is mention under Article 5(b) of the Sanctions and Asset-Freezing (Implementation of External Sanctions) (Jersey) Order 2021 where that is going to be exempt. So somebody could potentially be disqualified but under that area they would not be disqualified. I want to understand why that is.

The Minister for External Relations:

Only with the issuance of a licence. The sanctions regime operates to … if you come back to it is a foreign policy tool and at its heart is not wanting to provide money that is held in our jurisdictions to support Putin's war in Ukraine. It is saying we are … individual people are designated, funds are frozen but that is not to say that you cannot apply to the Government or to Dan's team to request a licence to do various things. Mostly it might be paying lawyers, paying service providers, paying bills if you have had to have repairs done on a house or just general upkeep. So you can get licences. Our concern is that those funds that you get a licence for is not finding its way to supporting the designated person or, of course, more broadly, the war in Ukraine. In this case, we are saying, no, that those directors should be disqualified, but there might be a case where a licence would be appropriate to allow a director that has being disqualified or being disqualified to be in place to support that particular decision. But only having come back to Government to request a licence to do so.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Under Article 5(b), the person will be placed under restrictions compared to say the other 2 laws. Is that what you are trying to say? Because if that is not the case, then it seems a bit ambiguous?

The Minister for External Relations:

I do not think it is ambiguous, it is saying that directors can be disqualified but there might be extraneous circumstances where something needs to happen under a licence from Government whereby you would need to have that disqualified director for a set decision or job just to do that thing until other directors are appointed.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

It would be very specific. It would be very specific to the actions. They would be outlining the licence and it would be for a temporary period of time as well, just to enable them to do whatever it is they would need to do as a director. After that they would revert back to being disqualified.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay. In terms of when we are looking at oversight, obviously there would be questions about where somebody is disqualified, if they are then given a licence, even if it is for a temporary period, what is in place to make sure that ...

Chief Officer, External Relations:

The team does that.

The Minister for External Relations:

The team do that. Nothing can happen outside of the licence, and the licence is very descriptive about what can be done.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

The team keeps track of that.

Head of International Compliance:

Yes, and there would also be reporting obligations within the licence under which they have a legal obligation to explain what they have been doing. It would be very carefully drafted to ensure that they can just do what we wanted them to be able to do rather than anything broader.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Does this follow a model elsewhere? Is this practice in place elsewhere?

Head of International Compliance:

Well, in the U.K. they introduced this directors' disqualification sanctions, it is a model ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

But I mean for the licences?

Head of International Compliance:

For the licences, absolutely. As the Minister was explaining, for all sanctions prohibitions, there will be licensing provisions that you, under certain circumstances, can apply for. But not only do they have to comply with the relevant licensing provision, you have to make sure that no licence is going to enable the undermining of the overall policy intent of the sanctions.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Was any consideration given to designating somebody else other than the disqualified director to be able to carry out those?

Head of International Compliance:

Other than for terrorist asset-freezing designations, there are no powers to designate in Jersey anyone for sanctions, whether asset freezing or director disqualification. Specifically for the director disqualification sanctions, these will just be U.K. designations. There are thousands out there.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am sorry, I was still talking about the licence. When the decision was taken to allow time-specific licensing for a disqualified director to make certain decisions, limited decisions, was any consideration given to a different method to achieve that? I.e. not give that person the ...

Head of International Compliance:

Not really, because this is the method that the U.K. have used and it is a common method across all sanctions.

Deputy M. Tadier:

But it will be monitored? That is the point we are seeking assurance on.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Yes.

Head of International Compliance:
Yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Thank you.

The Minister for External Relations:
As all of this work is quite bureaucratic heavy, it is quite technical and difficult, it needs a lot of input in regard to specific technical advice and a lot of liaison with other authorities in the U.K.

Chief Officer, External Relations:
It is not a quick process, particularly so when the licence applications are received by the team there is a whole piece of work that they have to go through to make sure they have all the information they need, assertions are tested, there is no way … it is not being used to circumvent those actions.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
How has this been working in terms of liaising with industry, making sure that everybody is understood so they can then update their own processes internally?

Head of International Compliance:
We have had a version of director disqualification sanctions in place since about February or April this year when the U.K. introduced the sanctions. In advance of that, there was Gazette notices, there was outreach to some of the industry bodies around the Company Law amendments that went through the States in January. There was a process of consultation, there was a working group where we took input from industry about some of the changes around that. There has been quite extensive consultation and also communication with industry about the changes.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
So, in essence, this is really just aligning with international best practice?

Head of International Compliance:
Well, with the U.K. Specifically with these changes, we think the impact will be quite minimal, I mean it prohibits people from appointing sanctioned persons, which they will not be doing anyway, and it allows certain people to apply for licences. It does not mean they will get one, but it allows them to at least apply for a licence.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Deputy Andrews, have you finished with the draft director disqualification?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, I have.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Good, thank you. Minister, we are going to move on now to the Double Taxation Agreement with the Kingdom of Bahrain, which you have already mentioned. We have just got a few questions for this hearing, we know we have got a letter sent to you as well for more detail, but I am going to pass over to Deputy Porée.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Minister, just to set the scene, we would like to start by saying that the agreement between the Government of Jersey and Bahrain was lodged on the 27th of January. The intent of this proposition is in part to eliminate the double taxation on income for business which operates between the 2 jurisdictions. What are the specific economic benefits that are expected from signing these agreements for Jersey and possibly for Bahrain?

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes, thank you for the question and thank you, Chair, too, for the long letter of questions, which is almost ready for signing when I go back to the office later this morning. D.T.A.s and signing and increasing the number of D.T.A.s has been in the Common External Relations Policy for a number of iterations and they do, as you said, Deputy, at their heart eliminate double taxation for business flows between the 2 parties signing those DTAs. Therefore, that is exactly what the benefit will be to Bahrain and to Jersey. We know that there is some Jersey trust and company service providers who have got offices in Bahrain. We know that already there is a good flow of business between the 2 jurisdictions. What this does is give certainty in regard to withholding taxes for dividends, interest and royalties. What it will ultimately do is allow for a greater flow of business between the 2 jurisdictions as any D.T.A. does. We, of course, in Jersey would like to sign more D.T.A.s. It is probably slightly more challenging for us because of our taxation structure, but Bahrain and other G.C.C. (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries are countries that know Jersey well. We have got a good strong relationship and book of business with them and this reinforces that.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you. Do you feel that there are any unintended risks that may have been identified with this particular agreement?

The Minister for External Relations:

In what way?

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Any unintended risks within the signing of this agreement. You have been very clear in specifying that the purpose of tax is beneficial to both Jersey and Bahrain, mainly when it comes to businesses. Could there be any unintended consequences coming from this agreement?

The Minister for External Relations:

Not that I think is foreseeable. It is in line with the minimum standards set by the O.E.C.D.'s (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) base erosion and profit shifting, which would have been the risk that one could possibly point to. But being in line with that standard means that I think we avoid that risk.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Where does the difficulty come, or resistance, to setting up, that is probably not the right word … the hurdle, shall I say, with setting up any new D.T.A.? I presume you have got a whole list of countries you want to do them with.

The Minister for External Relations:

If you notice the … as I read to you there: "Nil rates of withholding tax for dividends, interest and royalties." So you see there, there is not corporate tax. Because of the way our corporate tax is structured sometimes that means that interlocutors are not that keen to do it because they may not see the benefit to their own economy. We, of course, think that there is a very strong argument that says it can still benefit an economy, you pick the taxes that you can agree on and you facilitate foreign direct investment, which is a benefit to jobs and growth in those economies as well. Tom is the guy that negotiates these agreements on our behalf using, of course, the base model that we that we use. Our agreements are quite vanilla compared to some larger countries.

[10:00]

Deputy M. Tadier:

If I can move it on from Bahrain, I know we will get the answers back about Bahrain specifically but we come back often to the more general question about D.T.A.s with some countries in Europe that local residents would like to see having D.T.A.s. What are the hurdles for those?

Director, External Relations:

Yes, happy to answer. The first hurdle that we have to acknowledge is Jersey is a small jurisdiction and it is sub-sovereign, and there are some jurisdictions that do not sign treaties with sub-sovereign jurisdictions. They have never done it before. We are starting to see that change, there are more jurisdictions out there that have D.T.A.s, not just with the likes of Jersey but Hong Kong, other jurisdictions, but for some that is an initial hurdle and we just have to acknowledge that. The second one relates to what the Minister said, which is Jersey has a zero rate of corporate taxation, other jurisdictions have high rates of corporate taxation, typically in a D.T.A. negotiation there will be a trade-off around what the treaty rates are, so the idea of a D.T.A. is that you have a preferential treaty rate and that treaty provides certainty, because that is the rate that flows between the 2 jurisdictions. Obviously if you have a low rate of tax then you have less to offer in a negotiation. Then specifically on your question about individuals, one of the good things about the Bahrain D.T.A. is that it absolutely does provide benefits to individuals as well as to companies. So, for our part, Jersey always tries to negotiate full D.T.A.s which means it is not just about the rates of corporate tax but it also applies to those individuals. The reason why the Minister mentioned the benefit for this one with Bahrain is precisely because we know this is not about business flows. We know that there are people particularly in the finance sector who move between the 2 jurisdictions. There are businesses in Jersey that have offices in Bahrain. So you need a treaty to work out where someone is working across 2 different jurisdictions, where the taxing rights should sit so they do not suffer double taxation.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

This will be the flip side of the coin which is the next question. Will this proposition prevent tax evasion and avoidance? To what extent is that a problem?

Director, External Relations:

The really good thing with this D.T.A. is that both sides, Bahrain and Jersey, we tend to use the O.E.C.D. model convention. That has the all provisions against base erosion and profit shifting, as well as the O.E.C.D. minimum standards. The treaty fully conforms with those so we are satisfied and Bahrain is satisfied that we have baked into this treaty anti-abuse provisions that deal with those kinds of risks.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Minister, we are also the Economic Panel as well as International Affairs. Is it …

The Minister for External Relations:

Are we finished on the D.T.A. or not?

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is related to the D.T.A. but sorry to …

The Minister for External Relations:

I just wanted to say, I should have … Niamh is sitting quietly behind me when I said that Tom negotiated these. Tom is the diplomat and Niamh is the technocrat. So they do it together, yes. She is sitting quietly and I did not want her to think I had forgotten her important role in this.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I was going to ask you who the brains is behind it but I think that we get into very dangerous territory quickly. **[Laughter]**

The Minister for External Relations:

The other point you asked about a wider network. We have started a conversation with Romania about a possibility there of signing a D.T.A. That, I think, has been well received at the embassy level in London. But that needs to go up and there is more work to be done there. While not a D.T.A., we are engaging with Portugal as well. There is probably going to be an inbound visit hopefully before the election to talk about their tax blacklist but also the potential there for a D.T.A. But I would not want the public to run away and think: "Oh, we are going to get a D.T.A." It is a … it is not that at all. It is a very, very slow process but we try to … with answering your question about where we think … the local benefit to residents as well, we do try and engage, talk about those in our conversations as well because we recognise that there are many benefits that could be gained from them.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

That is great because my next question was going to focus on what other countries have you been looking at signing the D.T.A.s? Romania and Portugal are really positive news. Any others following from these?

The Minister for External Relations:

There are a few others as well. Largely either African or G.C.C. countries.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

What considerations do you give when you look at signing these D.T.A.s with new jurisdictions? What are the principles of your considerations given those agreements?

The Minister for External Relations:

Firstly, the principle is that we want a model agreement based on the O.E.C.D. model. It makes it easier. It shows that we are meeting international standards. It is more straightforward for negotiation and it avoids the pitfalls that you have been questioning about earlier. Then there is whether there is twofold things. We have got the ones which would benefit a great number of residents per se, the ones we just talked about, and then the business flows as well. Where are we seeing business flows coming from and how can we enhance that or where do we think there are other opportunities for Jersey's finance and professional services industry to grow more business?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I do have to ask the perennial question about human rights consideration. Bahrain does not necessarily feature very well on certain human rights watchlists, including rights of women. What considerations are given to that specifically when dealing? Is that something that your department is neutral on or are you aware of the wider implications?

The Minister for External Relations:

Firstly, when it comes to the agreements themselves, we are very clear that these are, in effect, trade agreements. Therefore, they focus on that element in this regard. Taxation, or with bilateral investment treaties, it is about investment flows as well as the supporting tax element. As you know, whenever we visit a country, we engage with the in-country embassy or high commission and meet with the high commissioner or ambassador. Those conversations, we always talk about the in-country human rights records. As we build relationships … we follow the U.K.'s foreign policy but as we build relationships, we find we can have more open conversations. I think the thing to say broadly about the G.C.C. is that they are on a journey. They have a different culture. They have a different religious base. But they are on a journey to change, as we have seen with the Prince of Wales visit there over the last 2 days. It has been interesting to see some of the in-country contributors that are talking about the change that they have seen. These things obviously are … that change is something that we support.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I just take this in a slightly different direction? Looking at D.T.A.s from a non-corporate tax … not exclusively from a corporate tax point of view but perhaps from personal income tax, is there any scope to use D.T.A.s to allow for flexible working where people are not necessarily based in one jurisdiction or another. They could live somewhere, work somewhere else and maybe the question of where they pay tax could be decided with reference to a D.T.A. Is that a possibility?

The Minister for External Relations:

It is a very good question because we see some of the difficulties that have been, in recent times, occurring between places like Luxemburg and France with their double taxation arrangements. Yet people are more mobile and doing more working from home than they ever have. I think they can help but there is also … I am going to pass to Cora because there is also things that Cora is thinking about when it comes to mobile working and how we tax them which is going to be important moving forward. Cora, I do not know if you want to say a little bit about that as well.

Deputy Comptroller of Revenue:
Of course. As part of the work that we are doing on competitiveness, we are looking at the taxation of cross-border movements of people in and out of Jersey. We are looking at ways in which we can reduce barriers that might exist at the minute or frictions in the system and uncertainty, where people might be working from a home office here or a base here but also potentially employed by somebody elsewhere. A big part of bringing more clarity to that is a review that we are doing on the personal income tax residence regime, which is underway and we have a goal of having a much clearer, more black-and-white test for people commencing 1 January 2028. That will bring a lot more certainty and help to that area of work. As we do that, we are also mindful that there is more guidance coming internationally from the O.E.C.D. about cross-border workers and working from home. I think over the next few years, we will see that change and evolve quite a lot. We are also doing … as well as the residence rules, we are doing more to look at how the tax system supports talent and makes it easier to bring talent into Jersey and makes it easier for Jersey businesses to have people working temporarily abroad to gain experience and bring it back. It is a big piece of work.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Are we potentially talking about someone that might live in Cheshire or Saint-Malo but they work in Jersey, either remotely or physically? The question is about how they pay tax, how they pay Social Security, what benefits they are entitled to, is that all under consideration?

Deputy Comptroller of Revenue:
That is a part of it, for sure. Yes, that is an important part of it.

Deputy M. Tadier:
We look forward to hearing more about that. It is not just something for your department particularly, there will be some cross working that needs to go on.

Deputy Comptroller of Revenue:
We will be working very closely with Treasury colleagues on that as well.

Deputy M. Tadier:
How far away do you think the Government is from that being a reality?

Deputy Comptroller of Revenue:

The residence regime work is advancing well. We have had a lot of stakeholder discussion and we will be doing a public consultation on some ideas that we have about it towards the end of the year. That will be subject to the next Government but we have some concrete ideas about how we should change it and we will be putting that out for wider discussion. Obviously, it affects all industries and all people across the island and different groups have got different priorities in what they need the system to do. That is definitely something that you will see within the next 6 to 9 months publicly.

Deputy M. Tadier:

All okay on that? Finished with that? Thank you. We are going to move on to Pillar Two. Minister, you have touched on that already. Pillar Two global tax work stream. Can you provide an update on any milestones that you are anticipating, hoping, for 2026?

The Minister for External Relations:

I am just trying to think, Chair, of when the last time I provided you with an update was as to whether there is an update. Probably there is. You know that the beginning …

Deputy M. Tadier:

We can talk specifically about side-by-side as well.

The Minister for External Relations:

… beginning of January, the O.E.C.D. issued a statement agreeing side-by-side agreement and some other refinements. It was quite a lengthy document that was issued at that point. In effect, what that agreement is seeking to say is that the U.S.'s global tax system can sit side by side as if it were equivalent to the O.E.C.D. Pillar Two regime. Of course, we were very careful in our forecasting and the numbers that we put into our budget to make sure that they were a base case. Even though we knew there was agreement, we also knew that there was potential disquiet and desire for change elsewhere. What we are doing now is, for the majority of in-scope companies, they are … all in-scope companies are continuing to register with Cora's team. First payment on accounts for last year's profits are due with the Revenue at the end of May. That, of course, will then give us a good handle on what the actual revenue for 2025 is. But we remind ourselves that even if there is any upside for 2025, as we have always suspected that might be temporary in nature … the side-by-side arrangements we are, of course, also considering. We continue to engage with both U.S. institutions and non-U.S. institutions. U.S. institutions turned us down. What their response to the side-by-side change might be … but also other institutions as well.

[10:15]

Deputy M. Tadier:

Is the side-by-side package to be seen as a compromise in keeping countries like the U.S. on board while still …

The Minister for External Relations:

If we go back to the G7 announcement early last year, or the start of last year was it? Or was it May? It was May, sorry. So May last year, when the G7 as part of the summit issued a statement saying they had all agreed that, in effect, the U.S. could be given equivalence. Sorry, what was your question again?

Deputy M. Tadier:

There has obviously been some deal here done so …

The Minister for External Relations:

So was it a deal? I think what happened there was, there was political agreement that they needed to accept that there was some equivalence there because at the time, if you remember, there was a piece of U.S. domestic legislation which everybody thinks of as 899, which was basically going to add an additional tax or investment into the U.S. You had also digital taxes, all of that came into the mix. So there was a political agreement back in May and then the technocrats have had to work through what they might mean in practice. I think it is what it is. I think, from my perspective, it is a political agreement that the O.E.C.D. has tried to make the best of.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can you talk to us about any exemptions that have been made for U.S. multinationals and what the concept of safe harbours are in the side-by-side package, if that is relevant to either the functioning of the scheme or for Jersey? Does any of that undermine the …

The Minister for External Relations:

It all ends up getting quite technical and complicated but, in effect, some bits of … for us, do not forget we never had the under-tax profit rule in our legislation, which was the big thing that the U.S. were really upset about because they felt that that was extraterritorial. The I.I.R. (Income Inclusion Rule), that if you recall we had a separate piece of legislation to deal with. The side-by-side means that that then does not apply to U.S. companies per se. Our M.C.I.T. (Multinational Corporate Income Tax), which was our domestic corporate income tax for in-scope companies, was a bespoke methodology which tried to in some way deal with the differential between the 2 regimes. It is important now for us to undertake this consultation work that we are doing to understand what the implications might be.

Deputy M. Tadier:
I suppose the bottom line is, do we know what the anticipated tax receipts will be for Jersey in the next years?

The Minister for External Relations:
This is why we have taken the cautious approach that we have in the base case and just putting the minimum in that we felt would be payable by in-scope companies that were not caught up or going to be caught up in these potential changes. We tried to foresee that right at the start of our budgeting process.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Just remind us of the figure.

The Minister for External Relations:
It is about £50 million a year.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Yes, thank you.

The Minister for External Relations:
Cora, I do not know if you wanted to add anything else. No, okay.

Deputy Comptroller, Revenue Jersey:
No, that is perfect.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Thank you for all that. Okay, I think we will move on to the next agenda item, which is for Deputy Andrews to ask about financial services.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Yes. Minister, this is for the Financial Services (Disclosure and Provision of Information). Under the Financial Services (Disclosure and Provision of Information) (Jersey) Law there is a code of practice and I just wanted to know, Minister, whether the Jersey Financial Services Commission has issued guidance about the revised code of practice, so people have a fuller understanding across industry.

The Minister for External Relations:

Are you referring to the consultation that we have just undertaken or are you referring to the changes that we introduced at the end of 2024 …

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
The changes.

The Minister for External Relations:
… around obliged entities' access?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Yes, yes.

The Minister for External Relations:
Obliged entities, I am pretty sure they have but I do not have that information in front of me.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Okay.

The Minister for External Relations:
I will just ask Helen.

Director, Financial and Professional Services:
I am not sure I have the information exactly. I would imagine so. I think there is a lot of engagement that went on with industry at the time because, as we gradually open up access, we want to make sure that people understand the rationale for that and how they can use it. The changes in 2024 only allow access to regulated businesses on Island for the purposes of conducting C.D.D. (Customer Due Diligence). There has been very limited use up until now of that access.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Okay, yes. Obviously we are living in an evolving world, for instance, with the use of technology and probably the nature of reporting has also changed as well. Do you feel that the code of practice is one that is modern and fit for purpose to try and capture some new elements that we have maybe not seen before?

The Minister for External Relations:
I think we have just got to be careful, in your question there is a number of questions. The code of practice that will deal with obliged entities and will be fit for purpose, as far as I am aware; I have

not had any commentary in the opposite direction. What we have also done in Government is issued a consultation document for further widening of access of something called legitimate interest.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Okay.

The Minister for External Relations:
That is a work in progress. All of that is probably slightly separate from, I think what you are asking about is the use of registers and technology at the Registry and all of that in light of technological changes. Helen, I do not know if you want to just say something about where the J.F.S.C. is in regard to its registry work.

Director, Financial and Professional Services:
Yes. I think, firstly, the codes of practice issued by the J.F.S.C. more generally will be considered as part of our wider competitiveness work. Where we are getting feedback that things do not work or there is little niggles, the J.F.S.C. is really willing to consider those and see if we can enhance them. The J.F.S.C. is also looking at its registry system for modern updates. They engaged a company last year to do a strategic review. They have done the findings and we are expecting probably towards the end of Q1 of this year a feasibility study to have been concluded by the J.F.S.C., so they can consider whether it is perhaps a brand new system, whether it is upgrades, whether it is patches, whatever it might be, to enhance that to make sure it is the best option for the Island.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Yes. Minister, in terms of your view, obviously it is a very important area in terms of the reporting of information, do you think Jersey has got that balance at the moment where we are manging to get information reported at the right time and also that it is a pragmatic approach and it is not burdening the financial industry too much as well?

The Minister for External Relations:
If we are talking about disclosure and provision of information, then I think the answer to that is absolutely, yes, it is. We are going through this consultation. We have made a commitment about legitimate interest. We take a different view from our U.K. colleagues. I do not know if there is a problem with that.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Okay.

The Minister for External Relations:

Our view is much more aligned with the international standard. It is not driven by politics; it is driven by legal cases and the reality on the ground. In a tech-enhanced world we know that confidentiality is even more important than it has ever been. We know that the sovereign case in the E.U. said that public access was inappropriate and in breach of human rights. We are working our way through that process. I think it is absolutely right and we have got it at the forefront of our minds, the continued competitiveness of Jersey. Rightly, if people are coming to Jersey because they see it as a safe harbour, they also expect data security and confidentiality for their data. That is a challenge for all Governments, of course, everywhere in every bit of government.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Absolutely, yes.

The Minister for External Relations:

I think that is right. If you are asking me a much broader question, which I think you might have been, there are any number of changes that we need to make to get that balance right.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, yes. Can I ask, Minister, obviously the Labour Government have obviously now taken over in the U.K. and I just wanted to know whether you have felt any pressure at all, not from the Labour Party itself but maybe some sections within the Labour Party who may be trying to apply pressure in regard to the disclosure and provision of information that they feel, potentially, should be more accessible or not?

The Minister for External Relations:

This is where I make the point that we may disagree with our U.K. counterparts. We may think that they take quite a political position. But we refer back to the approach of the international standards and also the approach that Europe takes as well. We have always had a longstanding policy of following international standards. Sometimes we have had to follow regional standards.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay.

The Minister for External Relations:

It is fair to say we have some quite robust conversations with our U.K. counterparts. We met with the Minister for Security. We have met with the Deputy Prime Minister. I am meeting again before the election with the A.P.P.G. (All-party Parliamentary Groups) on transparency.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Right, okay.

The Minister for External Relations:
We meet with, no longer Dame Margaret Hodge, Baroness Hodge and we continue those conversations.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Yes.

The Minister for External Relations:
I think that is important that we continue to engage. Was it during the summer that you had a … no, it was towards the end of last year you had a meeting with Guernsey, Isle of Man, the U.K. and the E.U. about their registries and the World Bank; that was in November.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Right, yes.

The Minister for External Relations:
They came to Jersey then. We are hoping to host another event in the summer with representatives of F.A.T.F. thinking about the same thing.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Okay.

The Minister for External Relations:
We are engaged in it; just because we disagree on what is the best approach … we remind ourselves that U.K.-relevant authorities have access to the information on Jersey's Register, under what is called the … what is it called?

Director, Financial and Professional Services:
Exchange of notes.

The Minister for External Relations:
The what?

Director, Financial and Professional Services:
Exchange of notes.

The Minister for External Relations:
Exchange of notes, yes. I should remember because I signed it, anyway exchange of notes, in as little as an hour where they think it is necessary.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Okay. Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Chair.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Thank you. Minister, I have got some questions for you about the Competitiveness Programme. I am mindful that you gave a talk in November, you made a speech in November. Can you remind us what that forum was? It was the financial services annual update I think it was; that was the event on 24th November.

The Minister for External Relations:
It could have been, yes, but basically I think yourselves and industry were all invited to it, yes. Over the last few years the financial services team have given an annual update about the work that they have been doing to industry; that happened to coincide with that. We have got then another event on 16th March where we will be talking about the competitiveness work again.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Thank you. We may have been invited, I do not think we would have necessarily been free. Minister, you said something there which was, I think, quite provocative but I am sure you can stand by it, is that you said it is no longer a privilege for …

The Minister for External Relations:
That was not provocative. Surely it is not my style, is it?

Deputy M. Tadier:
You said: "It is no longer a privilege for financial services businesses to operate in Jersey. It is now Jersey's privilege to serve them." Can you tell us about what you mean by that and how you think the world has changed?

The Minister for External Relations:
The reason for doing the competitiveness work, which has been going on for a number of months now, is largely twofold. The world of financial services is changing dramatically. We can have a bank that is fully on our phone, we never need to go into a building. The way that that bank is regulated is different from the way that the bricks-and-mortar bank is regulated there. We know and

we are hearing in some quarters about the private borrowing. We see the use of A.I. (artificial intelligence). We see the use of crypto currencies, whether that is DeFi - it is my age, Chair - or tokenised exchanges; it is totally changing. Put on top of that, the competitors that did not exist. We have been a successful financial services centre for 60 years. Some of our main competitors did not exist 20 years ago and they are throwing lots of money. They are copying what places like Jersey are doing. They are attracting talent. They are attracting business, Middle East and Far East. That the world that we have operated in is totally changed on its head. We have been incredibly successful to date. We have always been a jurisdiction of choice. We have been so successful that we have had to say we do not want you, we just want you; that has totally changed.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes, so is that …

[10:30]

The Minister for External Relations:

We have got to totally change our approach and recognise that, do we want people to keep choosing Jersey? If we do, we have got to offer the services, the products, the skills and the environment that is going to welcome them. On top of that of course is all of the geopolitical change that we are seeing, that we cannot open our news app in the morning without seeing some other externality changing.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you. Essentially, what you are saying there is that we cannot be complacent, I think is the message about …

The Minister for External Relations:

More than we cannot be complacent, we have got to up our game. We have got to up our game in Government. We have got to up our game in how we implement international standards. We have got to up our game in how we promote ourselves. We have got to stick to our core of tax neutrality. We have got to get out the message as well that Jersey is the place that it is because we have had a successful financial services centre.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you. Minister, with that in mind you also mentioned something called the concierge service.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can you tell us what that is and whether it is up and running yet?

The Minister for External Relations:

No, so it is not. We are going through a process, the final report will be with us shortly. We will then produce an action plan …

Deputy M. Tadier:

What is it first of all?

The Minister for External Relations:

… of the actions that is going to be taken.

Deputy M. Tadier:

What is a concierge service?

The Minister for External Relations:

A concierge service is basically … you do not need me to explain to you a French word.

Deputy M. Tadier:

But I need to know what it is in the context of what you are offering.

The Minister for External Relations:

It is basically reimagining how we welcome new business to Jersey. As I have said to you, some of our …

Deputy M. Tadier:

But how is it different to Locate Jersey? Is it something of what they do or is it specifically …

The Minister for External Relations:

I cannot tell you exactly what it will look like now but it is a co-ordination. Locate Jersey has been doing it in probably quite a narrow field. But I would imagine that we will take some of that model. Do not forget Jersey Finance are doing some of this stuff, alongside their promotional work as well. Some of the work … high-net worth team is doing some of this as well. Even Revenue Jersey does some of this because people pick up the phone to Revenue Jersey and say: "If I was going to bring this structure, how are you going to tax me?" Also, at the Financial Services Commission they do the same as well, they pick up the phone and say: "We have got this structure." You can see in the current model that it is so disparate and yet, as I go back to, these competitors that are new to the market, they have got, in a way, one-stop shop where they can control the decisions. The other thing is if you are bringing your business to Jersey currently you need to get 8 or 9 different yeses from organisations or people or institutions. You can see that if we are competing with a jurisdiction that just has to give one yes because they have co-ordinated all the work behind the scenes, we are at a disadvantage.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Yes, so …

The Minister for External Relations:
We need to get that provision to the point of if you want to come to Jersey you pick up the phone or you WhatsApp or you use the app for this concierge service and then behind the scenes they are doing all the work to get the decision to you.

Deputy M. Tadier:
This is specifically targeting financial services and that is fine because you are the Minister for Financial Services.

The Minister for External Relations:
That is right, yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:
But is there a concern here that the Government more widely is sending out a mixed message that we are open for financial services business but when it comes to other aspects of the economy or even culturally, we are not open for business? There is not a concierge service for teachers or for the hospital or for people wanting to open a sports facility in St. Peter, for example, or a whole host of things. Is there something that could be replicated to say that this is not just for …

The Minister for External Relations:
I could answer that in many different ways. Firstly, my responsibility is financial services, as you know, so I would not presume to answer on behalf of my colleagues. But I could equally say to you that 42 per cent of G.V.A. (Gross Value Added) is provided directly by Financial and Professional Services. When you come to indirect it is between 55 per cent and 60 per cent of the G.V.A. It is the driving force of the economy. Other sectors of the economy are complimentary and I am a strong believer in that we should not be complacent with those sectors either and we should not let those sectors die.

Deputy M. Tadier:
I suppose what I am …

The Minister for External Relations:
We are running up to an election, I have to be careful not to tell you what my policies are because I might see them in a Reform manifesto.

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:
You would be lucky.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Or you might see them in Deputy Andrew's manifesto.

The Minister for External Relations:
But I think at the heart of your question is, do we need to think about the rest of the economy in the same way? How do we renew it? How do we make sure that it grows and it has got a future? Then my answer to you is, yes, we do. But we should not ever forget that this is the driving force of the economy and G.V.A. We get the tax take that we do that provides the public services that we do because it has been successful in the past. It has to be successful in the future. If we want to deal with cost of living crisis, if we want to deal with investment in our infrastructure, we have got to have the money coming in. This is why it is so fundamentally important.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Thank you, Minister. Make a note of that for our manifesto, Deputy Porée. **[Laughter]**

Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:
Yes, I already have.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Okay. We are going to pass over to Deputy Andrews again for just the forthcoming legislation, if you are okay with the next question, question 38.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Yes, yes. Minister, obviously we have not got long left and I just wanted to ask you a question about the legislation that you are intending to bring forward and whether there is any other further proposals that are due to be lodged before the 19th of the month.

The Minister for External Relations:

I think there is one other, which for some reason we are just struggling to get over the line but I am hoping it is over the line today. Helen, it is in your …

Director, Financial and Professional Services:
Yes, it is the administration piece, I think that is what you are referring to, is it not?

The Minister for External Relations:
Yes, that is it, yes, the one that Louise is doing.

Director, Financial and Professional Services:
Yes. I think you had a private meeting yesterday around some financial crime elements.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Yes.

Director, Financial and Professional Services:
We are still going through the consultation process on those to make sure that industry are properly briefed and understand. We have acknowledged any concerns that they might have. The administration process is a change in other companies.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Okay.

Director, Financial and Professional Services:
Yes, I was off, I went yesterday but I am hoping that it was ready to launch.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
To launch, yes, yes.

Director, Financial and Professional Services:
Yes.

The Minister for External Relations:
It is nearly there.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:
Yes.

The Minister for External Relations:

But the other 2 bits that you were briefed on yesterday and they will not be coming forward.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, okay, I see.

The Minister for External Relations:

It is a minor bit.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes. Obviously there is probably quite a lot of work in the background as well, probably in preparation for the legislation coming forward in the third and fourth quarter of this year. I just wanted to know, Minister, were there any pieces of legislation that are quite significant in nature?

The Minister for External Relations:

No, because that has all been lodged. No, the orders will not be lodged, so it is not going to be States business. If I am totally honest with you I have been focusing on what I could get done between now and the election.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay, yes, okay.

The Minister for External Relations:

There are some big bits of legislation. There will be secondary legislation for the consumer credit, which will be later this year. Yes, the repeal of the control of borrowing …

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

The repeal, okay.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes. There is an order that is going to make some changes.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, I see.

The Minister for External Relations:

But it will be repealed and replaced with a new bit of legislation.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes.

The Minister for External Relations:

I would hope that that will be done by the end of the year. There is plenty of ongoing work.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes. No, that sounds like it. Yes, okay, no, thank you, Chair.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Thank you.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Minister, we are probably going to get through all of our question areas, which is a first.

The Minister for External Relations:

I have been short.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is probably slightly lighter but I think still important, the question area for our last section and it is to do with the Franco-British Young Leaders Programme.

The Minister for External Relations:

Yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can you give us some insight into what the ambitions are for that programme, explain what the benefits are and also what is coming up in terms of that programme in the next year?

The Minister for External Relations:

At its heart it is a people-to-people exchange. It is building relationships with young leaders who are going to be influential in their communities, so that they can continue those relationships later in life and it delivers understanding. I think the first 2 Jersey leaders found it extremely beneficial. They were able to at the summit meet President Macron and Prime Minister Starmer. We are just in the process of advertising for 2 new leaders for the next cohort. It has also meant that we have had other engagement in Paris with the French Chairs of the programme, as well as the U.K. ones as well. Deputy Morel recently participated in a panel event on power and trade at the French National Assembly, which was organised by Franco-British Young Leaders Programme as well. It is not only working really well for those leaders who are on the programme, it is also building more relationships between Governments as well.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Yes. Was that power as in political power or in energy, do you know?

The Minister for External Relations:
Energy.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Energy, right, that is an interesting area. Okay, thank you for that. One question I have got more generally - I suppose this is, potentially, an opportunity to have a little bit of fun in our last quarterly hearing - you will be aware of …

The Minister for External Relations:
We have not been already?

Deputy M. Tadier:
Yes. Our definition of fun might differ, Minister. You will be aware that the year of the Normans is coming up.

The Minister for External Relations:
Of that there is no doubt, Chair.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Yes. I am sure there is an intersection somewhere on the Venn diagram. You will be aware that the year of the Normans is coming up, I think it starts this year and it goes on maybe beyond. Whose area is that specifically?

The Minister for External Relations:
Yes, it is, it is 2027. Do you want to cover it or do you want to cover it? Because the person that leads it, Alex, who leads our European engagement, is not with us today, so …

Deputy M. Tadier:

This is clearly an international thing. It is a bit of soft power for the Normandy region of course but it is something that, potentially, would have fringe benefits for lots of other partners. Is it something Jersey is going to be actively engaged in and how?

The Minister for External Relations:
Yes, yes.

Chief Officer, External Relations:
Yes. The French office B.I.A.N. (Bureau des Iles Anglo-Normandes) is leading us for this. Discussions are already ongoing, so we are taking part in meetings with the Normandy region. Guernsey are obviously involved as well and Paris is also very interested too. It is really in terms of Government responsibility, it is split between External Relations and the Economy because there is a heavy cultural element as well there. But, yes, discussions are ongoing in terms of the programme; you have got funding in place to support it. We are really excited about how it all develops in 2027 and Ministerial and political involvement in that.

Deputy M. Tadier:
Okay.

The Minister for External Relations:
We see it as events in Jersey.

Chief Officer, External Relations:
Yes, it will be.

The Minister for External Relations:
Also co-ordinating and participating in events in Normandy and France but also in the U.K., as you know.

Deputy M. Tadier:
What kind of events are we talking about? Will it be across Government in different departments? Is it cultural or is it financial as well?

Chief Officer, External Relations:
Primarily it will be cultural.

The Minister for External Relations:
Yes.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

Primarily it will be cultural. I do not have the detail of the programme, unfortunately, in front of me.

Deputy M. Tadier:

No, that is fine.

Chief Officer, External Relations:

But I can obviously …

The Minister for External Relations:

We can provide …

Chief Officer, External Relations:

It is in development at the moment and I know you have been involved in some of it, Deputy, as well. I can certainly give you some details to this.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Minister, just to throw you a googly, while it might be …

The Minister for External Relations:

Am I a Norman? Is that what you were going to ask me there?

Deputy M. Tadier:

We do not need to do any D.N.A. (Deoxyribonucleic acid) tests here but …

The Minister for External Relations:

Probably would be the answer.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is probably quite uncontroversial to celebrate the year of the Normans but if it comes to celebrating the year of William the Conqueror’s birth, to what extent do you think that is problematic that we should be celebrating somebody with a questionable track record, albeit in his time, as a tyrant? Does that ever come up for discussion?

The Minister for External Relations:

It is a googly because …

Deputy M. Tadier:

Presumably everyone is switched off by this point, so I think it is quite safe to answer.

The Minister for External Relations:

Which of us knows? We have got all of these labels that have been thrown at him over the years. There is another school of thought that says that is all nonsense and was just a part of its time. I do not have any problem with … there is even doubt, of course, in some historian's mind that this 2027 is the right year, there is so much uncertainty. We remind ourselves that the lives of our predecessors 1,000 years ago were quite different from our lives today and the way that you record things, the way you think about numbers and all of that was totally different. The lives that everybody lived, it was not unusual for lords of particular regions to be at war with the other region and therein lay the …

[10:45]

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes, it was often the civilians that paid the price, I think.

The Minister for External Relations:

I think it could be, like you, Chair, that that is always the case.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes. Minister, just to finish on a final positive note, do you see the work of the Franco-British Young Leaders Programme, the regional work that is going on with Normandy, are we getting into a position we are getting stronger relationships again, we are rebuilding in some cases or strengthening pre-existing relationships, both with the regions but also with Paris, Brussels, et cetera?

The Minister for External Relations:

I think we absolutely are. There is more engagement now than there has been since before Brexit; that is certainly the case. But we should not confuse that with us getting then what we might want from a commercial point of view. Because, as we know, our friends and colleagues in France are fiercely independent and competitive themselves.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you. Okay. If everyone is happy, any further questions?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

No, not from me.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Anything from your side, Minister?

The Minister for External Relations:

No, thank you.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you for attending. Thank you and we wish you luck with the rest of your work programme.

The Minister for External Relations:

Thank you very much indeed. Thank you, panel and Chair.

[10:46]