

2021.09.14

12 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Social Security regarding family-friendly work time policies (OQ.195/2021)

Given the Minister's commitment to family-friendly policies, will she advise what consideration, if any, is being given to maximum work time regulations, including minimum break times?

Deputy J.A. Martin (The Minister for Social Security):

Currently in Jersey there is no right to a break during the working day and I will lodge regulations later this week that, if the Assembly agrees, will increase the amount of statutory annual leave from 2 weeks to 3 weeks and introduce for the first time a minimum 15-minute daily rest break. The Employment Law already contains the rights of an employee to a rest day in a 7 and 14-day working period. Article 10 gives a right in respect of a weekly or fortnightly rest break and Article 11 gives a right in respect of the entitlement to annual leave, at the moment 2 weeks, soon to be hopefully, if the Assembly agrees, 3 weeks.

8.12.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

The Minister may be aware that a few weeks ago I met with 2 Russian farm workers who were working for a potato company over here. Not only were they working very long hours, I saw their timesheets and on one occasion they worked 78.5 paid hours a week. That does not take into account their half-hour free lunch, and they were working on occasion 16 days in a row before they got one day off and, in another case, 13 days in a row at very long hours. It is not just that industry. There are others, perhaps even permanent workers on the Island who work long hours. Will the Minister consider bringing forward maximum work-time regulations as well as the break times she is proposing and if not, why not?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

The maximum work time is an E.U. (European Union) directive and I am not sure if it would help. I have heard of this case when I came back and I am committed to talk to the committee and the Minister for Home Affairs. Everyone coming on this Island is under this Employment Law. The employee needs to know it, written clearly, and the employer needs to know it, written clearly, in the language people can understand. This is not good. This is people who have come here on a visa and we get that courtesy of the U.K. as well. If we do it wrong, we could lose out on having any people on visas, so we need to educate the employer and I am sorry to hear about that case.