

2019.10.08

4 Deputy J.H. Perchard of the Chief Minister regarding the diversity of boards appointed by the States: (OQ.234/2019)

Further to the answer to Written Question 264/2018, when does the Chief Minister plan to start the online tracking of the diversity of boards appointed by the States?

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

The Connétable of St. Ouen is answering this question.

Connétable R.A. Buchanan of St. Ouen (Assistant Chief Minister - *rapporteur*):

I thank the Deputy for her question. The Chief Minister did not give a specific commitment to track the diversity of boards online in his response to Written Question 264. However, the Chief Minister did commit to discuss the arm's length bodies, the level of data that will be held and how to provide this information publicly. Ultimately, this may be one of the agreed outcomes. Subsequently, I recently attended a meeting between the independent boards and the Jersey Appointments Commission where the importance of keeping and establishing data of this nature was emphasised. The Jersey Appointments Commission guidelines, discussed at this meeting, clearly require principles of equal opportunity and diversity must be inherent in the recruitment and selection process of these boards. The necessity of ensuring good practice was discussed and emphasised with the arm's length board representatives, including the need for diversity in recruitment and appointment of selection panels and the need to work closely and involve the Jersey Appointments Commission in the board and senior appointments of those bodies.

4.4.1 Deputy J.H. Perchard:

Can the Minister confirm whether he will be presenting the diversity of boards to the public at regular intervals in the future and from when?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Yes, the answer is probably yes. I would just remind the Deputy, we did undertake an exercise in March, or May, of this year, analysing the gender composition of 80 arm's length boards and their 592 members appointed by the Assembly, or the Minister. That found that the gender balance was 39 per cent female and 61 per cent male and, in short, we can do better than this. This is part of the discussion that we are having with these boards. It was also noticeable that some boards were more gender-balanced than others, so it is our intention to share this data in March 2020 and I will be discussing with the Deputy of St. Clement, who has political responsibility for this board, how we can also publish other data going forward.

4.4.2 Deputy J.H. Perchard:

Can the Minister please define "diversity", because he spoke there about gender balance, which is not the same as what my question pertains to. So, if he could just, perhaps, rephrase his answer to my previous question and give a clear definition of what he means by diversity?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I thank the Deputy for her question; as always challenging. The Deputy knows what we mean by "diversity". It means sexual and other methods of diversity, racial as well and we do have laws in place that make sure that boards do have those policies in place. So, yes, we are looking at the full range of diversity, how much of that information will be published needs to be discussed with the

boards in question, but I can give her an undertaking that the S.E.B. (States Employment Board) will be pushing hard to make sure that all forms of diversity are appearing statistically on the composition of board members.