

23.02.07

11 Deputy M.B. Andrews of the Minister for External Relations and Financial Services regarding trade, investment and tax agreements (OQ.10/2023)

How many trade, investment, or tax agreements are currently being negotiated which are expected to be finalised in 2023?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour (The Minister for External Relations and Financial Services):

I thank the Deputy for the question. External Relations leads and co-ordinates a negotiation of international agreements in line with the updated Common Policy on External Relations. We have a target of the number of agreements we sign each year; generally 3 this year. These include trade, investment and tax agreements. There is a whole range of bilateral and multilateral agreements. The precise timings of when each agreement can be finalised depends on the other jurisdictions or jurisdictions' negotiations. In parallel, in progressing new agreements, External Relations also works with Revenue Jersey and the Minister for Treasury and Resources to make amendments of older tax agreements which are required to bring in line with global standards. The Minister and I hope to bring a number of these to the Assembly in the autumn. As far as international standards on tax are concerned, we also expect it may be necessary to sign new multilateral or bilateral agreements in the area of tax and this includes agreements to implement the O.E.C.D. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 on the digitalisation of the global economy. Details are going to become clear later this year but I was pleased, with the Minister for Treasury and Resources, to brief the Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel on those agreements. Finally on trade agreements, I should say that Jersey does not negotiate trade agreements in its own right; however, in line with our established constitutional position, we seek to advance Jersey's interests through working with the United Kingdom. Since Brexit this is a new competence that the United Kingdom has and, as Members will know, there are a number of agreements: the C.P.T.P.P. (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership) and its bilateral negotiations with India, Canada, Mexico, Israel, Ukraine, Greenland and also the G.C.C. (Gulf Co-operation Council). It is impossible to say when all these negotiations will conclude but I will keep Members informed as negotiations and public information is available.

4.11.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

In relation to Jersey's internal sovereignty and the powers that he retains in terms of his Executive powers, is the Minister hoping to be arranging future agreements without the need to have the U.K. be first of all having to agree in principle before then going through our legislature?

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

We do seek effectively entrustments from the United Kingdom in a number of different respects to negotiate certain different types of agreements. We have an entrustment in relation to international tax agreements, we have entrustments in relation to the bilateral investment treaty in respect of the U.A.E. (United Arab Emirates) and we seek to advance others where there are jobs and growth and a benefit for the people of Jersey. We seek those entrustments and we will not hesitate to do so.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I thank the Minister for providing his delivery plan really after this question originally was drafted. Could the Minister please identify what percentage of his busy agenda for work in his portfolio relates to financial affairs?

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, I think that is outside the scope of the original question which related to trade, investment or tax agreements not financial affairs.

[11:00]

Very well, there is no valid supplementary question there, so there is no further supplementary, Deputy Andrews.