

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA
FRANCOPHONIE (JERSEY BRANCH) BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY, 6th JULY 2004

Question

The Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie is currently a cross section of French speaking States members. Would the President confirm that this arrangement will not change in any way under the ministerial government? If not would he give details of the changes that are envisaged?

Answer

I am happy to give the Deputy the reassurance he is seeking about the future of the Jersey Branch of the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF).

The APF is very much a 'parliamentary' organisation as its name implies and it is important that, under the ministerial system, it remains representative of the Assembly as a whole and does not simply become part of the Executive arm of government. In Parliaments around the world where there is a government and opposition system it is, of course, traditional for Branches of international parliamentary bodies such as the APF or the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to include representatives from all parties, and delegations to conferences are selected to reflect this balance.

As the Deputy points out in his question the Jersey Branch of the APF currently includes a cross section of members, with the Executive Committee appointed by the States after each election. I see no reason why this should change under the new system of government. Although it is important for members involved in the APF to have a working knowledge of French I trust that in the future the Executive Committee will include some Ministers and/or Assistant Ministers as well as members involved in scrutiny and other 'backbench' members.

Members will be aware of moves to improve the co-ordination of links with France as set out in the recent report of the Working Party looking into this matter. I believe that the value of the APF as a way of promoting Jersey's interests on the international stage has possibly been underestimated by some in the past. It is worth pointing out that Jersey can be represented at APF conferences alongside delegates from France, Canada, Switzerland, Belgium and many other European and African countries and I am sure this is very valuable as Jersey develops its own position on the international stage.

I am hopeful that the role of the APF can be enhanced through greater co-ordination of all Jersey's links with France (and other French speaking countries) so that the overall benefit to the Island of the work of the APF, the Commission Amicale and the proposed Groupe d'Etudes with the French National Assembly and Senate can be maximised.