

STATES OF JERSEY



PUBLIC HOLIDAYS: DESIGNATION OF FRIDAY 8TH MAY 2015 (P.11/2015) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 10th March 2015
by the Council of Ministers**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers gave strong consideration to allocating an additional public holiday in view of Liberation Day falling on a Saturday in this special 70th Anniversary year. Many of the arguments outlined in the proposition of Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier were taken into account by the Council of Ministers before a decision was taken not to bring forward a proposition of its own in this regard.

The Council of Ministers is fully supportive of the events being organised to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Island's liberation from Nazi occupation, and does not view an additional public holiday as a necessity or requirement towards ensuring that Islanders and visitors alike can properly mark this special occasion in Jersey's history.

Members will already be aware of the numerous events that are being planned for the Liberation 70 weekend. These will begin on the evening of Friday 8th May and continue throughout Saturday and Sunday at both Island and parish level. The visit of the Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex on Liberation Day itself will undoubtedly be a particular highlight for all Islanders. Reflecting on the planned programme, the Council of Ministers is not convinced that allocating Friday 8th May as a public holiday would enhance the commemorative events that are now in the final stages of being planned.

In addition to the weekend celebrations, Members will know that Jersey and Guernsey have worked together in developing the Channel Islands Heritage Festival, which will run from 3rd April through to 11th May. This month-long programme of events will allow all Islanders the opportunity to be involved with the Liberation 70 celebrations through marking the unique history and culture of the Channel Islands. It is also anticipated that the festival will provide a further boost to our tourism industries. The Council of Ministers is therefore again not of the view that a public holiday on Friday 8th May is necessary to ensure that the Island can properly mark this special occasion and take advantage of tourism opportunities.

Reflecting on the above points, the Council of Ministers are not persuaded as to the precise purpose of allocating 8th May as an additional public holiday. Liberation Day is the most important date in the Island's history and can only be properly celebrated on 9th May. This is exactly what will happen this year, with the addition of a full weekend of celebrations and a month-long heritage festival to complement Liberation Day itself and reflect the significance of the 70th Anniversary.

Ministers also noted the added expense to the public sector which would result from this proposition. As outlined by Deputy Mézec, previous Treasury estimates have identified the cost of an additional public holiday at approximately £1.5 million.

The Council of Ministers therefore do not believe that the Liberation 70 commemorative events will be enhanced through the allocation of an extra public holiday and are consequentially unable to support this proposition.