

Jersey: still occupied

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The [Jersey Evening Post](#) reported yesterday that:

Last month External Relations Minister Ian Gorst announced that Jersey was following the UK by introducing a 'settled-status' scheme, under which non-British and Irish EU nationals would need to register to retain their right to live and work here.

They would also be able to continue to bring close family members, such as spouses, children and parents, here after the post Brexit transition period ends in December 2020.

Anyone registered under the scheme, which will run online and operate from the end of the year, would be subject to stricter checks on identity, length of residency and criminal background.

It's almost amusing to note just how much places like Jersey really are part of the UK when they have to so closely replicate what the UK is doing as a result of Brexit. But what was much more interesting was the fact that they also reported that:

External Relations director David Walwyn [has] said that Jersey had a higher proportion of workers who would be affected than the UK.

'Twenty-five per cent of the Jersey workforce come from 26 EU countries and aren't UK or southern Irish nationals,' he said.

'That's about 20,000 to 22,000 people. That will be one area where you as employers should encourage staff to register.'

The official population of Jersey's 100,000 at present. What that means is that over 20% of its current population are EU migrants. In comparison, the UK has a population of 2.9 million people with EU nationality, or 4.5% of its population. The disparity cannot be chance.

I know Jersey well enough to know that not all those with EU nationality will be working

in high-powered jobs in the finance industry: there are, for example, quite a number of Portuguese on the island undertaking jobs on very low pay. But that is a situation replicated in the UK. So the disparity has to come down, in large part, to the activities of the finance industry which makes up more than 50% of Jersey's GDP.

As many in Jersey know all too well, the finance industry is not some local initiative operated for the islands benefit by those with long-term association with the island. In fact, it is almost anything but that. Add in those who might have UK or Irish nationality to those from the EU who are simple 'fly by nights' come to exploit the offshore opportunity that Jersey provides for personal career or financial gain, to see is an island whose supposedly offshore finance sector is in fact very largely run by persons from the very places whose tax systems it is deliberately designed to undermine.

To put it another way, this is not a Jersey enterprise. And it is not for the benefit of Jersey. This is an activity that occupies Jersey for the benefit of the finance industry.

Jersey knows about occupation.

And I am well aware that there are those in the island who do think its time that its occupation should come to an end.

I suspect they may have to wait a while as yet. Jersey's occupiers are not going to let their good time go for the sake of something like Brexit.