

Speech for dinner hosted by President of Madeira

Wednesday 12th June 2013

Your Excellency, President of the Regional Government of Madeira, Your Excellency, Representative of the Republic of Portugal, Your Excellency, President of the Parliament of Madeira, Chief Minister of Jersey, Madame Minister and Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen

Agradeço-lhe Senhor Presidente, pelas suas simpáticas palavras de boas-vindas. Eu e a minha esposa, junto com o Primeiro Ministro estamos felizes de estar aqui na Madeira e nos sentimos honrados pela vossa generosidade e recepção.

1. Thank you, Mr President, for your kind words of welcome. My wife and I, together with the Chief Minister, are delighted to be here in Madeira and we feel very honoured by the generosity of our reception.
2. My wife and I have only been to Madeira once before when we came here for a most enjoyable holiday. But I do in fact have a personal connection with the Island. My grandfather - that is to say my father's father – died and is buried here. He came here on holiday in 1952 and was dancing at teatime in Reid's Hotel when he suffered a fatal heart attack. That is not as tragic as it sounds. He was 72, which was a good age for those times. Furthermore he died very happy as he was dancing with his wife and having a most enjoyable time. If your time on earth is up, that is as good a way to go as any!
3. But enough of personal matters. We are here today to celebrate the warm ties of friendship which exist between Madeira and Jersey. That friendship has developed since people from Madeira first began to come to Jersey, which

was many decades ago. Initially, they came to work in the fields of tourism and agriculture on a seasonal basis. But many stayed to make their lives in Jersey. As is well known, people of Madeiran descent form a significant proportion of our population. The census in 2011 showed that about 7000 Portuguese nationals live in Jersey, the vast majority of whom are Madeiran. To this figure must be added first and second generation descendants who have been born in Jersey, so that the total number of Madeiran descent are thought to be well over 10,000. That is a significant proportion of Jersey's overall population of approximately 100,000.

4. Although, as I say, they worked initially in tourism and agriculture, they have branched out into many other activities. They have a well-deserved reputation for hard work and honesty. Many have started their own businesses. Indeed, my wife and I have just moved house. As those of you who are married will know, this means that we are now undertaking much building work to change everything! The builder who is carrying out our work is Madeiran. Others have gone into the professions such as medicine and the law. In addition, I am pleased to say that there are now 9 Portuguese members of the Police Service with an aggregate of 82 years' service. I know from the Chief Officer that their contribution is invaluable and very much appreciated. Many have also joined the Parish Honorary Police, which means that they give of their time for no remuneration in order to serve the community
5. In short, Madeirans in Jersey are participating fully in all aspects of Island life. I would like to take this opportunity publically to acknowledge the enormous contribution which they have made to the Island. They will, with pride, be celebrating Madeira Day on 1st July and I hope very much to participate in those celebrations.

6. It would be wrong not to acknowledge that some of them faced challenges in the early years but we in Jersey believe strongly that everyone who resides in the Island, whether they come from a family which has been there for centuries or have only recently arrived, should be treated equally. In support of this aim, the States recently passed legislation outlawing discrimination and providing for an independent tribunal which can make awards where discrimination is proved; so there will now be a practical remedy where discrimination is found to exist.
7. Mr President, I imagine that you are probably one of, if not the, longest serving democratically elected leader in the world. You have been repeatedly re-elected as President for some 35 years. That is a most distinguished record. In addition, you also hold important offices in the national context and your skills at dealing with the European Union are legendary.
8. Most importantly for us today, you have personally played an extremely significant role in the development of relations between Jersey and Madeira. You came to Jersey in 1998 to sign the Friendship Agreement and again in 2008 to celebrate its 10th anniversary.
9. That agreement spoke of increasing cooperation in the fields of commerce, industry and tourism; of promoting the improvement of social conditions of citizens living and working in each island; and of developing and enhancing links between our respective government departments and the promotion of mutual respect for the difference cultural traditions of the two islands. I believe that much has been achieved since the signing of that agreement. For example, there is the Twinning Agreement between St Helier and Funchal and I know that the Constable of St Helier, whom I believe is due to visit

Madeira shortly, was very pleased to re-name one of his streets as Rue du Funchal.

10. There have also been a number of visits from Jersey to Madeira, including various politicians, a delegation from the States of Jersey Police, from Family Nursing and Homecare, from a Jersey Under 16 football team and from young musicians as well as others. There have been similar visits in the other direction. We were particularly pleased to receive the Regional Secretary for Culture, Tourism and Transport, Dr Estudante in 2012 and the Regional Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources, Dr Correia earlier this year. In each case they were of course accompanied by Gonçalo dos Santos, who has played such a significant role in developing the friendship between Jersey and Madeira and I am so pleased that his contribution was recognised by the award of the Bailiff's Silver Seal in May 2008. I know that Dr Estudante played an important role in paving the way for this visit. Dr Correia brought with him a substantial business delegation and I hope that this has opened up the possibility of new business opportunities, particularly for the selling of goods and produce by Madeira to Jersey.

11. In the field of education, there is now considerable support for pupils whose first language is Portuguese, including small group or even one to one English lessons and also after-school lessons in Portuguese, as well as many other measures.

12. But there is always more that can be done and the Chief Minister and I hope very much that this visit will stimulate further progress in pursuance of the Friendship Agreement. For example, on his visit to Jersey, Dr Correia informed me that you have many highly qualified nurses and that there might

be scope for some Madeiran nurses to work in Jersey, where we have a nursing shortage. The Chief Minister accordingly agreed that the Hospital Director should form part of this visit and I know that she has had productive discussions. The visit has also included two officers from the Environment Department who have had discussions with their opposite numbers. I believe there are many other areas where cooperation could usefully be enhanced such as in the field of social security, transport links, health promotion and other areas.

13. The close friendship between Madeira and Jersey was shown at the time of the terrible floods in 2010 which led to the death of 53 people and left hundreds more homeless. This happened shortly after the earthquake disaster in Haiti where Jersey had launched a public appeal. Despite that having only just occurred, members of our community responded very positively to the appeal launched by the charity Side by Side, which was supported by the Island's government and I much look forward to our visit tomorrow to Ribeira Brava to see the retirement home to which the funds from Jersey have contributed.

14. Mr President, we have had a most interesting first day of our visit and we much look forward to tomorrow's programme. I have had the great privilege of being invested as a 'Confrade' of the Madeira Wine Institute and you, Mr President, have just done me the great honour of awarding me the Autonomic Insignia of Distinction. I feel very humbled by this generous gesture on the part of the Government of Madeira. On behalf of the Chief Minister and my wife, may I thank you and all of your colleagues for this wonderful dinner, for your kind and generous hospitality and for the friendship which exists between our two wonderful Islands.