

Appendix B

REQUEST 1: EUROPEAN DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

Officials are of the view that the occasion is “*an event of exceptional local, national or international significance*” and does meet the requirements of paragraph 15.

That said, Public Engagement officials are also of the view that the request does NOT meet the requirements of paragraph 17 of the policy, which states:

“Other than those days scheduled under paragraphs 8 to 11, special lighting will not be approved to mark an event/occasion that occurs repeatedly, for example an annual Day or Week, unless it is a significant anniversary of that event/occasion. In addition, no event/occasion scheduled under paragraph 12 can be marked by special lighting more than once in any three-year period.”

Officials believe that, while the event/occasion is significant, it is **not** a “significant anniversary” of that event or occasion (2021 will be the 17th European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism). In addition, the Building was lit in 2019 to mark the same occasion and paragraph 17 of the policy precludes special lighting marking an event/occasion scheduled under paragraph 12 more than once in a three-year period. As such, officials are of the view that the request does NOT meet the requirements of paragraph 17 of the policy and, in normal circumstances, would recommend that it be declined. However, as noted above, officials are of the view that the request and any decision on it may be seen as contentious and politically sensitive and therefore the Commission may also wish to bear in mind certain other factors when considering and deciding on the request.

Those factors are:

- A letter of support for the application from Mr Allister MLA has been received. A copy is attached and is self-explanatory. As he notes in his letter, Mr Allister has been linked with an event to mark the Day for some years now, and of course it will not be possible to hold such an event this year. Mr Allister adds: *“Therefore it is all the more important that the modest request from SEFF that the building be illuminated in red is agreed to by the Commission. This gesture would illustrate that people who have suffered so much have not been forgotten by the powers that be. Conversely, failure by the Commission to agree to the request will reflect badly on the Assembly. Having hosted the event for many years without a single complaint it is important that European Victims Day is acknowledged in 2021 at Stormont. I believe the Commission can best do this by agreeing to illuminate Parliament Buildings in red.”*
- Some media criticism was attracted last year following the decision not to light the Building to mark the event in 2020 and the matter was also raised in oral and written questions. Indeed it was mentioned on the Floor of the House yesterday (Tuesday 2 March 2021) during the debate on the Commission’s budget.
- The European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism is one of the

days suggested as an additional day for lighting Parliament Buildings in papers presented to the Commission's meetings on 9 December and 17 February, albeit that no consensus has been reached on that paper.

In essence, this request meets the requirements of the policy other than that at paragraph 17, namely that *"no event/occasion scheduled under paragraph 12 can be marked by special lighting more than once in any three-year period"*, and officials would normally recommend that it be declined. However, it is also clear that the request and any decision on it may be seen as contentious and politically sensitive and therefore officials believe that they are unable to provide a recommendation to approve or decline. Rather, they believe that, having drawn the Commission's attention to all relevant factors, this request is one upon which the Commission should reach its own conclusion.