

French Bakery Fined for Operating Seven Days a Week

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Category : Human Interest

Unlocking Word Meanings

Read the following words/expressions found in today’s article.

- 1. **exemption** / ɪɡˈzɛmpˌʃən / (n) – state of not being subject to a rule or law
Example: Monica was granted **exemption** from wearing our uniform because wearing skirts is not allowed in her religion.
- 2. **flock** / flok / (v) – to go to a place in large numbers
Example: Thousands of tourists **flock** to our country every year to see the seasonal cherry blossoms.
- 3. **campaign** / kæmˈpeɪn / (n) – an organized set of activities to achieve an objective
Example: The company had a **campaign** to increase its sales and profits.
- 4. **stand up for (someone/something)** / stænd ʌp fər / (idiom) – to support or defend
Example: My brother **stood up for me** when my classmate was bullying me.
- 5. **time off** / taɪm ɔf / (n) – time dedicated for rest
Example: If you have been working for long hours, make sure to still take **time off**.

Article

Read the text below.

A bakery owner from a small town in France was fined for opening his bakeshop seven days a week during summer last year.

France’s labor law allows bakeries to open on Sundays but forces them to close on another day if local law requires it. In the baker’s town, two regulations force bakeries to close one day a week. However, owners may apply for **exemption** from the law from the local labor department.

In 2016, employment officials granted the baker exemption. However, when he applied again in 2017, his request was still rejected. Despite the rejection, the baker still opened his bakeshop daily throughout summer last year. Consequently, he was fined €3,000.

The baker explained that he only opens his bakery seven days a week during summer, when many tourists **flock** to the town. Meanwhile, customers supported the baker by starting a signature **campaign**. The mayor also **stood up for** him, saying that it is reasonable for that kind of business to open every day in a small town where there are few bakeries. However, majority of the bakers’ association in the town supported the rule. Hence, the customers’ petition was rejected.

A similar incident happened in 2015, when officials fined a famous French baker €1,500 for not taking **time off**. The baker said that working daily should not be an issue and that fines only cause serious losses for businesses. However, the head of France’s association of bakers explained that France’s labor law allows bakeries in the country to have fair competition by encouraging people to buy bread from different stores when other ones are closed. Because he broke the law, the famous baker was also forced to pay the fine.

Viewpoint Discussion

Enjoy a discussion with your tutor.

Discussion A

- Do you agree that bakeshops must be fined for not closing once a week? Why or why not?

- If you were the baker, how would you handle high customer demand while still taking time off?

Discussion B

- Do you think the labor laws in your country ensure the well-being of employees? Why or why not?

- Under what circumstances would you be willing to work seven days a week (e.g. for a high salary, for a job you love)?

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