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PRESS STATEMENT

The Royal Gibraltar Post Office (RGPO) would like to clarify and correct the statement issued by the TGWU / ACTS on Friday 18th April 2008 and reported in the GBC news and press on Saturday.

Under no circumstances has Mr Chris Riddell, CEO RGPO, “misled the general public”. This is totally untrue and is irresponsible reporting by the TGWU / ACTS. Moreover, it is the TGWU / ACTS statements that are totally misleading when it comes to issues regarding to the postal workers.

The CEO clearly reported to the media who came on site at the Sorting Office on Thursday that weather had affected mail despatches the previous week and that no mail regardless had been received since the previous Sunday. This is clearly evidenced in a quote from him at page 2 of the Gibraltar Chronicle on Friday 18th April. On the other hand, however, it is the TGWU / ACTS statement which completely misleads the public: firstly, because it leads the public to believe that all the mail backlog received last Sunday was expected by management to be delivered in one day when in fact it was split over 5 days (in accordance with the Collective Agreement and proven best practice over the last five years); secondly, because it states that Supply Workers did not finish their walk allocation within the contracted hours, when in fact all fully trained Supply Workers, working individually, did. Of course, those Supply Workers who were accompanying permanently employed Postal Workers could not, as the “slow pace regime” was set by the permanently employed postal workers training / accompanying them. Even the non-fully trained Supply Workers working on their own came up trumps, with only one failure on one of the 13 walks on one day; this despite not having had full training or developed the higher sorting and preparation speeds which only come with time. This clearly exposes the smokescreen created by some delivery Postal Workers in an attempt to undertake less work.

With reference to the TGWU / ACTS quote that the RGPO also expects its Postal Workers to deliver the daily local pillar box collection, daily overland mail via Spain and mail from other countries other than the UK in addition to the agreed split, the answer is yes. Insofar as utilities mail is concerned the statement by the TGWU / ACTS also implies that this is expected to be delivered in one day, when in fact all utility deliveries are split over the next five working days precisely to avoid any overload. This has always been the case since 2003 and neither Government nor the RGPO will permit an erosion of duty to the bad old days when a local letter took well over 10 days to deliver in order to secure an 8am to mid-morning working schedule for most walks.

The RGPO, as quoted by TGWU / ACTS, fully recognises that the issue with the airlines needs to be resolved. This is being addressed by both Government and management. The TGWU / ACTS has been made fully aware, via means of both verbal and written communiqués, that both Government and management are working flat out to resolve this matter even though it is ultimately Royal Mail's responsibility to get mail to Gibraltar. The issue with the airlines does not entitle postal workers, however, to refuse to work (or do so on a "go-slow" basis) when given a reasonable day's work, to the further detriment of the public.

The TGWU / ACTS quote that the RGPO treats mail, which has suffered a considerable 6-day delay in the UK in its transit time to Gibraltar, as "precious" when it arrives again implies that the RGPO expects it to be delivered in one day but this, as explained above, is not the case as it was split in accordance with the Collective Agreement and carried over the next 5 days. The responsibility to timely get mail to us all the way to Gibraltar Airport clearly lies with Royal Mail; only then does the RGPO gain control over it and can affect its delivery times. Despite this, we are liaising with Royal Mail to speed up a solution.

The RGPO trusts that such statements, traversed herein, issued by TGWU / ACTS could only have been issued on misinformation received.

The Government and RGPO will issue a second press statement this week on inbound airmail and how it is addressing the matter to improve the UK airmail flows to Gibraltar. Meanwhile the RGPO expects to continue to deal with airmail backlogs as per the provisos of the Collective Agreement and proven best practice, as indeed it has done for the last five years.