



GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
Ministry of Enterprise, Development, Technology and Transport
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PRESS RELEASE

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The Government is baffled by the statement issued by GSLP/Liberal Spokesman, Dr J Garcia on the implementation of the recommendation made by the Gibraltar Maritime Administration following the accident between the MV 'New Flame' and MV 'Torn Gertrud' in August 2007. It is now become customary for Dr Garcia to issue statements, which show his lack of knowledge on the subject matter or a complete lack of understanding of the issues. His latest statement is yet another example of this.

The Gibraltar Maritime Administration carried out an investigation on the MV 'New Flame's' accident and reported various recommendations on 3rd June 2009, which the Minister for the Port, the Hon Joe Holliday confirmed in Parliament, had been accepted by Gibraltar Port Authority (GPA).

The Government confirms that the GPA continues to improve the existing Vessel Tracking System (VTS) and have purchased new equipment, which is currently been delivered to Gibraltar for installation in January 2010.

The GPA will encourage Masters to engage Pilots when outbound from the Western Anchorage. However, as the Minister for the Port recently explained in Parliament this will take time to implement. In any case, a final decision by the GPA has not been taken on whether this new regime will apply to all vessels, just tankers or vessels over a certain size.

The recommendation which seems to be worrying Dr Garcia most is the establishment of a restricted zone in the vicinity of Europa Point and this he should know has already been implemented. A Notice to Mariners (No. 12 of 2009) was issued on 23 November 2009, declaring the position of the 'Los Picos' buoy and the exclusion zone of 1 nautical mile from Europa Point for all vessels except those under 24 metres in length. The UK Hydrographic Office has already been notified of this exclusion zone and it will be reflected in the issue of a chart update and being marked on the Admiralty charts, in due course.

The Port Authorities of Gibraltar and Algeciras have established formal links / communications between the two port authorities to ensure a full exchange of traffic information. There has been progress in this matter, between the GPA and the Algeciras Port Authority. The completion of the installation of the new upgraded VTS in Gibraltar in January 2010 and in Algeciras in March 2010, will allow formal protocols to be established in the Bay of Gibraltar. Meanwhile, a hot line will soon be in place that will allow information to be exchanged on a case by case basis.

Minister for the Port, Joe Holliday said "Once again Dr Garcia is being irresponsible by making allegations, which are untrue or inaccurate, purely for political ends and aligning himself with Gibraltar's critics in Spain to damage Gibraltar with false public statements. The reality of the matter is that if Dr Garcia was genuinely concerned, he would check the position with me, before issuing any statement."