



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
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PRESS RELEASE

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Joint Communiqué and Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Joint Working Group

This memorandum of understanding has been arrived at between the following parties:

1. Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar; and
2. The President of the La Linea Union of Fishermen, Leoncio Fernandez Ramos.
3. The President of the Association of Fishing Boat Owners of La Linea de La Concepcion, Juan Morente Morales.

Background

This Memorandum of Understanding follows various meetings held between representatives of the above parties and others.

The position of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is that the law of Gibraltar must be upheld and that breaches of the law cannot be condoned or tolerated at any distance from the shore.

The enforcement of the law of Gibraltar is exclusively a matter for the Royal Gibraltar Police, which is independent of the Government.

The representatives of the Spanish fishermen claim that the fishing methods and the nets that they use are legal in Spain and in the European Union and maintain that these do not harm the marine environment.

All sides agree without prejudice to the respective positions:

1. That the principal objective and purpose is to ensure that the marine environment is protected and preserved in the most sustainable manner possible;
2. That a technical Joint Working Group between the parties will be established to report to Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar;

3. That the working group should set up a Commission of Independent experts to examine all issues surrounding this question;
4. That the current incompatibility between the objectives of the fishermen and the objectives of the law of Gibraltar will therefore be examined in depth in order to achieve a greater understanding of the respective positions and to seek to identify situations that might enable all parties' objectives to be met; and
5. That the discussions will continue to reflect the spirit of friendly co-operation and common sense that all the parties have shown in relation to this issue to date and without seeking to defy and without breaching the laws of Gibraltar currently in force.

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar remains ready to accept the inclusion of the Algeciras Union of Fishermen and Fishing Boat Owners in this Working Group.

The parties will remain in constant contact in order to avoid misunderstandings of the respective positions that may be misrepresented.

Gibraltar, 22nd May 2012.