



**GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR**  
Ministry of Tourism, Public Transport and the Port  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Failure of Algeciras Ferry was for commercial not political reasons**

It is wrong for the Opposition to point to allegations by the operator of the Algeciras Ferry, MEDEX, to “an unnecessarily aggressive attitude by the new Government” as a reason for the withdrawal of the ferry service between Gibraltar and Algeciras.

As the statements of the Gibraltar Government, supported by official statistics, have made patently clear, the withdrawal of the service was exclusively and entirely for commercial reasons and not for political reasons.

An examination of passenger numbers shows that there was a total of 10,190 passengers coming into Gibraltar in the twelve months of 2011. In 2011, there were a total of 594 trips. In other words, this means that the average number of persons coming into Gibraltar per trip was 17. In respect of passengers from Gibraltar to Algeciras, there were 9700 in 2011. As a result, even if the figures of both arrivals and departures are taken into account, this still means an average of 33 persons per trip. The Government notes that in the whole of December, only 10 people came to Gibraltar on the ferry and 12 went to Algeciras in 6 trips.

Commenting on the matter, the Minister for Tourism and the Port Neil Costa said:

“Given the extreme bout of political sour grapes currently consuming the Opposition, in general, and Mr Caruana in particular, I am not at all surprised by the reference to this matter in their press statement. I do find it extraordinary, however, that they should publicly come out preferring to believe the statements of the Spanish operator rather than the explanations of the Gibraltar Government. Far from being aggressive with the ferry operator, as the Opposition alleged, the Government was conciliatory and accommodating. I personally met with the operator of MEDEX on 23<sup>rd</sup> January and informed him that I would raise the issues discussed at the next meeting of the Cabinet. Moreover, I held preliminary discussions with the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister, among other Cabinet colleagues. Instead of waiting for Cabinet to discuss the matter, MEDEX announced the withdrawal of the ferry a few days later and hinted at the changes of Government in Gibraltar and Spain as the reason. For the reasons fully explained in previous Government statements and my interview on GBC, it was not acceptable to the Government for MEDEX to allude to

political reasons to explain the failure of this commercial enterprise. The passenger figures speak for themselves. It goes without saying, that the new Government welcomes any operator on this maritime route.”