



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR

Ministry for Equality & Social Services
14 Governor's Parade
Gibraltar

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MRS ELLUL-HAMMOND IS DELUDING HERSELF

The GSD Opposition has taken issue with Minister Sacramento's statement that 'there is a lot of work to be done in the field of women's issues.' However, all the Minister has done is to re-state the GSD's position last summer when, in a press release, Mrs Ellul-Hammond said, 'I accept that more could have been done' for women's issues under the last GSD administration.

With a wonderful sense of ironic timing, she now has the nerve to criticise Minister Sacramento exactly at a time when the Minister was away from the Rock to attend the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), a world forum dedicated exclusively to gender and equality and the advancement of women. Not only did the GSD administration fail ever to send a representative to this important world forum, it did not even think it necessary even to have a Minister for Equality!

Another wonderful irony is that Mrs Ellul-Hammond suggests that Minister Sacramento had shown little interest in meeting with 'representatives from women's groups and business to discuss, work together and tackle issues that affect women in Gibraltar.' It is barely two weeks since the Minister met the Unite Women's Committee for exactly these reasons and she has also been meeting regularly with UK Government officials and with local organisations and associations. There is therefore no reason for Mrs Ellul-Hammond to offer to advise Minister Sacramento on the need for a cross-party committee because the necessary issues are already being addressed and the Government is confident that the relevant stakeholders are now engaged. At a time when the GSD administration, by its own admission, 'could have done more for women,' we do not remember it offering to set up any cross-party committees!

Mrs Ellul-Hammond provides a list of the ten relevant GSD achievements during its sixteen years in power. Conveniently she omits to mention that at least half of them were forced upon the GSD by EU directives. One of her claims is that of 'a sheltered home for abused women' and yet the home established by Claire Borrell had been thriving for several years before the GSD administration belatedly chose to provide it with any support. Women in Need now receives more Government funding but, more importantly, the charity will now be engaged in the Government's strategy regarding domestic violence.

And Mrs Ellul-Hammond is also deluding herself when she claims that she has discussed the 'White Ribbon Campaign UK' with the Minister. No such conversation has ever taken place. However, it is the case that the Campaign has approached the Minister who is setting up meetings with them. Indeed, if any men would wish to be involved with the campaign it is clear that they should make contact with the Ministry for Equality and Social Services and not with anyone else.

A final irony is that the GSD should quote statistics from 'the last 20 years' to condemn the Government for the disproportionate number of women in 'part-time, opportunity-free, low paid employment.' And who was in power for 16 of those 20 years, Mrs Ellul-Hammond?