



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR  
PRESS OFFICE  
No.6 Convent Place  
Gibraltar  
Tel:20070071; Fax: 20043057**

**PRESS RELEASE**

No: 269/2014

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> June 2014

**CHIEF MINISTER REFLECTS ON LONG OVERDUE IMPROVEMENTS TO  
GIBRALTAR'S SOCIAL FABRIC**

Amongst the many policy initiatives introduced by this Government, it would be wrong to undervalue the excellent work being done across the wide areas of Ministerial responsibility. However, I feel that, over the last few weeks, my administration has introduced a series of social measures which will improve the social fabric of our community for generations to come.

Last week, this Government amended the Gibraltarian Status Act which, amongst other things, extended the right to be registered and identified as Gibraltarian to those British citizens who had lived in Gibraltar for 10 years, rather than for 25 years as was previously the case. Many British people who have lived here for more than a decade feel themselves to be Gibraltarian and see Gibraltar as their long-term home. They love Gibraltar and care about its future as much as the rest of us do. It is therefore right and proper that, henceforth, these people will be registered as true Gibraltarians, something that is long overdue.

In the last few days, we have also seen Gibraltar's first civil partnership being entered into, following the new legislation that was passed earlier this year. In this respect I must commend the excellent work jointly being done by the Minister for Equality, the Hon Samantha Sacramento, and by the Equality Rights Group. In addition, in a development led by Justice Minister, the Hon Gilbert Licudi QC, we have introduced amendments to the Crimes Act which aim to protect people from hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation and to extend the range of offences to include aggravation based on hatred due to religion, age, disability and sexual orientation (previously, aggravation was only based on hatred due to race). This is also long overdue.

This Government has also taken positive action to stamp out bullying in the workplace with the enactment of the Employment (Bullying at Work) Act 2013 which came into law in February of this year. Not only have we passed the relevant legislation, we are practising what we preach by also introducing a Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure to cover all Government employees. We are committed to providing our staff, as our most important asset, with a working and learning environment that is free from all forms of bullying. Dare I say, something that is also long overdue and which was a theme of our election

campaign. We fully support everyone's right to be treated with dignity and respect at work and we are taking appropriate steps to achieve this.

For the members of our community who live on the northern estates, the quality of their lives has been much improved by the various measures we have taken to combat anti-social behaviour linked to the tobacco trade. These improvements come just as the estates are benefitting from a major programme of refurbishment – a double whammy of social improvement! The refurbishment has also been extended to Moorish Castle which will soon start to look even better than it did on the day it was first completed. No-one can argue that these improvements are not long overdue.

This government has taken huge strides in many important areas of commerce and finance, education, health, housing, tourism, culture, employment and the environment but I have been struck by how, over the last few months, we have acted to improve the social fabric of our community in ways that are likely to having lasting, positive effects for generations.