



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

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WESTERN BEACH POLLUTION - GOVERNMENT WELCOMES SPANISH ADMISSION

HM Government of Gibraltar has welcomed the fact that the Spanish authorities have admitted to the European Commission that they have caused the sewage pollution which affects Western Beach.

This comes as the culmination of extensive submissions made by HMGoG to the Commission. The Commission had frequently enquired as to whether the source of the pollution was in Gibraltar but the Government of Gibraltar always refuted such a suggestion and indicated to the Commission that all the evidence pointed towards Spain as being the source. To support its argument, the Government sent extensive evidence, including records of water sampling and plans of Gibraltar's properly regulated discharge system which made it clear that Gibraltar was fully compliant and that the origin of the pollution was not in Gibraltar.

In a reply to the Commission earlier this year, the Spanish authorities admitted that the main reasons for the polluted spills may be the inadequate maintenance of the collecting system and the pumping stations, together with some 'uncontrolled' inputs of waste water from households in La Línea to the rain water collecting system.

The Spanish authorities have also confirmed that the municipalities in Campo de Gibraltar had recently signed an agreement with a subsidiary of the Spanish Public Works Ministry to find and remove any waste water from the rain water collecting systems and ensure regular monitoring at the discharge points. This project will cost an initial investment of EUR 6.5 million.

HM Government of Gibraltar also welcomes the fact that the European Commission has committed itself to follow up the efforts by the Spanish authorities to solve the problem.