



PRESS RELEASE

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GSD Want to Return to Disgraceful Illegal Agreement

The GSD's statements in respect of fishing are as usual no more than a hypocritical smokescreen designed to hide their desire for the illegal fishing to continue under the type of agreement they did in the late nineties.

The GSLP-LIBERALS when elected complied with the manifesto commitment to undo the GSD's illegal, immoral and improper Fishing Agreement of 1999. Under that agreement, the Gibraltar Government agreed that there should be a discriminatory two tier enforcement system for the Nature Protection Act, one for locals and one for Spaniards. This discriminatory agreement was unconstitutional and drove a coach and horses through the most basic principles of the Rule of Law. Even the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Westminster Parliament saw it this way. This is the illegal situation that Mr Feetham is defending with facts that he makes up as he goes along and without regard to the law and the importance of it being enforced by an independent police unconstrained by the deals done by politicians for the convenience.

The situation at present is completely different in that the Gibraltar Government has no such agreement in place. In fact now the RGP are finally once again free to use their discretion in applying the law, as should always be the case.

In addition, the Department of the Environment is active in enforcing the Marine Regulations regardless of nationality. These do not deal with nets, but with other types of fishing, including angling and spearfishing and have dealt with a number of incidents since it came into force on 1st January.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "The present Government does not seek to tell the Police what to do. We will not tell them who to arrest and when. Neither do we do "dirty deals" like the GSD did, which allow non-residents to break the law of Gibraltar. Our position is clear, the law of Gibraltar must be enforced equally amongst all people within Gibraltar. A large majority of Spanish fishermen accept that and are working with the Department of the Environment to get themselves licenced under our new laws. Many sea bourn fishermen are no longer coming to fish in our waters with nets. Some still are and this is a breach of our laws which we do not condone as Mr Feetham's GSD did. Daniel Feetham is clearly trying to "run with the hares and hunt with the hounds". He needs to choose which side he is on. He defends the illegal GSD fishing agreement which allowed Spanish fishermen to fish indiscriminately and yet



condemns the fact that there is no less fishing by them. He is just trying to rouse people who are annoyed by the fact that Spaniards are fishing without telling them clearly that his present position is that he wants to allow them to fish even more. The man's political hypocrisy knows no bounds, but he is so transparent that all but the most foolish see through him. Those who want the fishing to stop should not heed his clarion call, as he is only calling for the fishing to be allowed either by law or by another "dirty deal" à la GSD. The Government is very happy indeed that the serious fishing fraternity understands how enforcement is being rolled out in a responsible and proper manner after 16 years of GSD failure to regulate the marine environment. There are still issues of course, but Rome wasn't built in a day and the GSD's legacy of permitting Spanish fishing in breach of our laws has had an enduring effect. The GSD have done huge damage to the Rule of Law and to the marine environment by their illegal, immoral and improper agreement. Daniel Feetham has a lot to keep quiet about in this respect."