

PRESS RELEASE

No. 668/2015

Date: 28th September 2015

Minister Bossano Speaks at Labour's Gibraltar Reception

At the reception hosted by HM Government of Gibraltar on Sunday evening at the Brighton Labour Party Conference, Joe Bossano addressed a very well attended meeting. Minister Bossano attended the conference on behalf of the Chief Minister, who was in Gibraltar for the RGP Freedom of the City parade and the Departure of the Governor.

Minister Bossano reminded Labour Party members of the special relationship that has existed since the creation of the GSLP between the two sister parties and how UK Labour has always been fully committed to the defence of the right to self-determination of the peoples of all the non-self-governing territories in accordance with Chapter 11 of the UN Charter which covers all such territories including Gibraltar.

In inviting the shadow Foreign Secretary Hilary Benn to reply, Mr Bossano said:

"I have to say particularly to Hilary that although his dad was always a staunch defender of decolonisation and self-determination, he did not become, I regret to say, a fanatical defender of Gibraltar and the Gibraltarians. But that was because I caught him at a later age, but as I have caught Hilary at a younger age I am sure I can be more successful with Hilary than I was with him."

Mr Benn responded saying that there were things that he differed on with his father but he went on to give a clear and unequivocal response:

"We absolutely as the Labour Party uphold the right of the people of Gibraltar to self-determination. Because there is a natural hunger, a thirst on the part of human kind to be able to take decisions about how we live and how we run society and how we deal with problems that we face and how we fulfil our aspirations for a better future."

"It is what has motivated people throughout human history and the Labour Party and the Labour movement has been at the forefront, both in the fight against colonialism and in the modern age to support people who are trying to resolve their differences not by guns but by argument."

He also referred to the agreements that have been breached by Spain and said that any discussion of these had to be in the trilateral forum so that the people of Gibraltar would have the final say on anything agreed.



The shadow Foreign Secretary made a very clear case on Labour supporting the UK and Gibraltar voting to remain in the European Union. He said that the UK will soon face the most important decision it has made in 40 years about Britain, and Gibraltar's place in the world.

Mr Benn declared that the Labour movement is solidly in support of Europe.

"The future must be based on partnership, collaboration, working together, binding people together by common economic interests and common value and I look forward to standing alongside everybody else when that referendum comes."

Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey also spoke this year for the first time at the Gibraltar reception and stressed that the future of Gibraltar could only be decided by the Gibraltarians whose wishes are paramount.

Other speakers who also defended the rights of the people of Gibraltar to decide their own future were Clare Moody MEP, who represents Gibraltar in the European Parliament, and Lindsay Hoyle who has been a long-standing friend of Gibraltar in the British Parliament.

STATEMENT ISSUED FROM THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE IN BRIGHTON BY JOE BOSSANO, MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT