

PRESS RELEASE

No: 42/2016

Date: 3rd February 2016

Unusual Algeciras Pilot Incursion

An 'incursion' into BGTW by an Algeciras pilot vessel took place just after midday on Wednesday 3rd February 2016.

The Algeciras pilot boat 'Piloto' was observed at 1225 hours entering BGTW by the Gibraltar Port Authority Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) staff, heading towards a large tanker which had just weighed anchor off the Western Arm.

The pilot boat continued towards the tanker without any request to Gibraltar VTS for permission to enter BGTW and several minutes later the pilot boarded the vessel less than one mile from the Western Arm despite instructions given to the master from Gibraltar VTS not to allow the boarding.

The Algeciras pilot then proceeded to navigate the tanker out of BGTW, finally anchoring the vessel to the north, in Spanish waters off El Campamento.

These 'incursions' by the Algeciras pilots are a fairly frequent occurrence. However, in this particular instance the action, deep into the western anchorage, with no communication with Gibraltar Port Authority, was a blatant disregard for the navigational safety of vessels in BGTW.

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar has immediately referred this incident to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Government expects appropriate and proportionate action to be taken urgently via the appropriate diplomatic channels.