

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Statement on Air Quality

Trevor Hammond has yet again rushed onto a bandwagon and proven that he just doesn't have a clue about the environment. His race to associate himself with what a German NGO, NABU, working together with the Spanish group Verdemar, well known for its repeated political statements against Gibraltar proves both his total lack of expertise and his willingness yet again to try and scare the community and provide Spain with opportunities to attack Gibraltar.

The information collected in a short period by the German team quite simply cannot be taken as a representation of air quality in the area. Firstly, details of the instrumentation used and the calibration of the equipment have not been made available. Secondly, the samples were taken just as a ship was leaving port where of course there will be a spike in readings. This cannot in any way be compared to any average level or to the levels at any other port. It shows Mr Hammond's further failure to understand either science or statistics. The comments made by the NGO, taken out of context, are misleading.

The measurements that Dr Friedrich made appear to be of particle numbers, rather than particle mass as measured in the Gibraltar Air Quality network, and therefore cannot be directly compared. Nor has the size of the particles recorded been mentioned. Therefore one cannot reach any long-term conclusions based on this report alone. As the GSD's environment spokesman, Mr Hammond should understand this.

The Department of the Environment and Climate Change is interested in the data, and will analyse them, and has requested further details from NABU. When these are received it will of course study these closely, but it is not expected that this will establish that the usual levels of pollutants are anywhere near the peak detected on this occasion.

Mr Hammond's claims about air quality in general are simply not correct, and interesting considering that his party, the GSD, wanted to place a heavily polluting diesel power station in the South District and wanted to block the move to the much cleaner LNG with their scaremongering tactics at the last election. They were also the party in power when bunkering fumes were at their very worst, a situation much improved now with vapour recovery systems in place.



Published data show that air quality in Gibraltar is improving all the time, especially with the closure of the old South District power stations, which the GSD had made no effort to deal with. Indeed, air quality data show that Gibraltar attained EU required levels on nitrogen oxides for the first time ever since records began in 2016. Mr Hammond is not aware of the work going into ensuring that Gibdock and other areas provide onshore power to vessels and so his claims that Government is not doing enough are spurious and indeed wrong. Moreover, the move to LNG bunkering, which, subject to all the safety requirements, is being pursued, and which would reduce pollution from ships significantly is, like the new power station, something that Mr Hammond has been trying to block.

Commenting on the statement, Minister for the Environment, Energy and Climate Change, John Cortes stated, "Of course I want air quality to improve further, and will never be satisfied. That simply proves my commitment to driving this forward. What we are doing by providing a new power station, burning LNG and with pollution reducing devices, closing down the old diesel plants, pressing forward with onshore power, working on reducing traffic and encouraging electric and hybrid vehicles, encouraging energy efficiency and renewables, is totally unprecedented in the history of Gibraltar. Trevor and the GSD are worried about this. That is up to them. Our air quality is better than it has been for many years and it will continue to improve."