



No: 222/2019

Date: 27th March 2019

Elliott Phillips puts his foot in it again with Xenophobic slip in Parliament!

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar notes that the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Elliott Phillips, has rightly had his ears pulled by Unite the Union on his disgraceful statements in Parliament that Gibraltar should use workers as "bargaining chips."

The Chief Minister of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "Mr Phillips has put his foot in it again. His judgement is suspect and his statements objectionable and populist. I am very concerned that Mr Phillips was inciting xenophobia by his extraordinary remarks in Parliament in the manner that we sometimes complain is incited against Gibraltarians in Spain.

"Additionally, Mr Phillips keeps getting it all legally wrong too. We have secured long term rights for Gibraltarians. All Gibraltarians who live or work in Spain (and there are a handful of the latter) have been assured the right to continue living there in future, even post Brexit, on the same terms as other EU nationals. Mr Phillips seems not to have understood that. Future rights for others, including future frontier workers, have not yet been negotiated or secured by anyone for anyone in the context of the EU / British citizens. The sooner Mr Phillips finally gets that, the better. If he just switches on a news channel, he can catch up on where we all are on those issues.

"These are febrile political times in the United Kingdom and in Europe. Gibraltar does not need to fall into the trap of political incitement of xenophobia for narrow, shallow and short term political gain. Mr Phillips needs to be more responsible. He does himself and his bitterly divided party a disservice when he falls into the trap of calling for people and their livelihoods to be used as bargaining chips. He shows himself up when he demonstrates he doesn't understand the legal issues that apply. He seems to be pandering to the hard Brexiteers in the GSD executive committee! His reference to workers as "bargaining chips" was a very unfortunate use of words. Coupled with his very xenophobic statement about "using" foreign people and his very deep misunderstanding of the legal issues have colluded to perfectly illustrate Mr Phillips' lack of judgement. At least people can now see how little he knows, what he stands for and how bad his judgment is. Not worth relying on, not safe for Gibraltar and not worth voting for!"