

**STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 107/2005**  
**9 November 2005**

The Opposition is surprised that anyone should question why we raised the issue of illegal fishing in our statement of 28 October.

It was clearly explained at the time that fishing incursions by Spanish fishing boats allegedly using illegal drift-nets had been brought to the notice of the Opposition. Therefore the timing of our statement was hardly a mystery.

In a parliamentary democracy people have a right to approach the Opposition with their concerns. The Opposition, for its part, has a duty to take those complaints on board and take whatever action it deems is in the best interests of the complainants. The Opposition has repeatedly said that its services are available to all the citizens of Gibraltar irrespective of their political persuasion.

In this instance, the Opposition was particularly concerned at the fact that a person who reported Spanish fishing boats using nets in breach of the law claimed to have been told by the Royal Gibraltar Police that there was an agreement which allows Spanish fishermen to fish in our waters 225 metres from our shoreline outwards.

The point is that the fishermen were using nets which are illegal under European law as well as under our law, and no political agreement in Gibraltar can override European law, even if a political decision is taken to turn a blind eye to minor infractions of our own law.

It is deeply regrettable that the actions of civic minded persons who report matters to the police should be described as creating problems.

The Opposition urge those conscientious people who witness any matter they think should be brought to the notice of the authorities and/or of the Opposition to continue to do so.

ENDS