

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 108/2005
10 November 2005

The Opposition consider that the latest comments made by the Government on the question of diverted flights being allowed to fly on to Gibraltar from Spanish airports is in flat contradiction to what the Government was saying before.

On 16 September the Chief Minister described as “excellent news” the fact that a British Airways flight was allowed to fly to Gibraltar directly from Malaga. He said that he was very happy that the restriction had now obviously been lifted and that diverted flights could now fly from Malaga and other Spanish airports to Gibraltar.

At the same time Mr Caruana dismissed reports that Rafael Estrella, the PSOE spokesman, had said that the British Airways flight was very much a one off. He said that “Rafael Estrella is not the Spanish Government” and claimed that the Spanish Government have written confirming the nature and extent of the lifting of the restrictions.

The Opposition cannot understand why the Government should have given up their original position, which they claimed to have in writing, and should now be advising airlines not to request permission to fly directly to Gibraltar when a flight is diverted to a Spanish airport.

On the launching of the “trilateral forum” it was announced that the Spanish Government would lift this restriction immediately as a goodwill gesture in order to create a spirit of trust and confidence.

The Opposition do not accept that Spain have the right to impose or remove restrictions in this manner. The plain fact is that they should have been removed a long time ago when General Franco died in 1975 without Gibraltar having to give anything in exchange.

ENDS