

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 90/2006
2 August 2006

In a GBC interview on Monday, Mr Caruana accused the Opposition of “saddling the Government with statements about joint use of the airport” and claimed that this was not the Government’s position and that it was deliberately being misrepresented.

According to Mr Caruana, the Government’s position has never been that they are involved in discussing with Spain entering into an agreement for the joint use of the airport and that all that they are talking about is about measures to expand the use of the airport.

Although these labels may appear to mean more or less the same thing, they describe fundamentally different concepts. The 1987 airport agreement was an agreement for the joint use of the airport. It is the agreement that continues to be quoted in European Union instruments. The application of these is suspended in respect of Gibraltar’s airport pending notification of the implementation of the airport deal of 1987.

The expanded use of our airport in order to bring about greater utilization of its facilities does not imply the necessity to involve Spain in its administration, any more than if the expanded use resulted from flights from other countries. In that event, it would not involve participation from entities from those other countries either.

In Malaga, or other airports close to Gibraltar, there is a constant effort to increase the volume of air traffic and in none of those airports in any shape or form whatsoever is it ever suggested that any other country should participate in their administration within Spain’s national territory.

The position in Gibraltar should be no different. The airport is located within the boundaries of Gibraltar’s national territory and not in Spain.

This latest statement from Mr Caruana appears to give the lie to all the reports in the Spanish media and to the statements made by the Spanish negotiator Mr Pons, all of which have until now clearly stated

that what was under discussion in the tripartite forum and what is about to be signed next month was a joint use agreement.

That is to say, it is the Spanish participant in the tripartite talks and not the Opposition in Gibraltar that has attributed to Mr Caruana his involvement in negotiating an agreement to introduce a joint use regime with Spain in Gibraltar's airport.

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