

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 157/2006
6 November 2006

The Opposition notes that the Gibraltar Government now accepts that a future Government is entitled to express a different view on the references to jurisdiction and sovereignty of the airport contained in the Cordoba statement.

However, they do not consider this to be necessary given that the Cordoba statement makes it perfectly clear that it has no effect on sovereignty and jurisdiction.

The Cordoba statement, to which the present Government of Gibraltar subscribes, states that the references to sovereignty in the communique are bilateral to the UK and Spain.

In respect of the airport, the acceptance by the present Gibraltar Government of this bilateralism is specifically linked to the dispute over the sovereignty and jurisdiction over the territory on which the airport is situated.

The Opposition neither understands or accepts that there is a dispute over the sovereignty and jurisdiction over the territory on which the airport is situated even though the UK and Spain accepted the existence of such a dispute in relation to the 1987 airport agreement and in the references to the issues of sovereignty in the plural in the 1984 Brussels agreement.

The Cordoba statement therefore by making it clear that it has no effect on the dispute over the sovereignty and jurisdiction over the territory where the airport is located, means that by Iberia flying to Gibraltar Spain is not accepting that it is landing in a British Regional Airport whose sovereignty it does not dispute.

This is why the Spanish Government argues that this phrase recognises the existence of a dispute which we in Gibraltar have always rejected. It is also why we reject that there is any legitimacy in the Spanish claim that flights between a Spanish airport and Gibraltar would be within Spanish territory, as Mr Moratinos has said in the Spanish Parliament and as was said of the 1987 airport agreement.

Mr Caruana may think that this is an overdose of distortions and confusions. We think that it is absolutely necessary to restate our position every time that the Government attempts to cloud these issues and pretend that these differences do not exist.

The position that we are explaining now is identical to the position we adopted at the outset when the statement issued by Mr Caruana was published. The only u-turn is that Mr Caruana said that any attempt by any future Gibraltar Government to adopt a different position to his own would constitute cherry picking and would not be permitted by Spain, a view that was always indefensible and is apparently no longer being defended.

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