

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 35/2007
19 March 2007

The Opposition deplores the continued failure of Cammell Laird to recognise TGWU as representative of its workforce and to grant it negotiating rights.

Gibraltar employers may not be required by law to grant unions recognition as is the case in other European countries, but local employers have always done so.

Responsible employers wanting to do business in our country should behave in accordance with what is custom and practice here.

The right to belong to a trade union is a fundamental human right. Our previous and present Constitutions recognise the right of freedom of association and a trade union is an association of workers. The Trade Union and Disputes Ordinance provides trade unions with certain immunities and rights. All of these fundamental legal rights are useless if employers refuse to recognise trade unions' representation of workers. Although the recognition of a trade union is not something required by law, employers failure to do so can lead to a serious erosion of the workers' rights which have been fought for in this community in the past 50 years and elsewhere internationally in the past century.

We are keen to see all employers in Gibraltar recognising trade unions, especially given that such recognition enables collective bargaining to go on on behalf of the workforce as a whole.

Shadow Minister for Employment Mr Fabian Picardo said:

"I think Government, and in particular the Minister for Employment, should be doing more to ensure that Cammell Laird and all other employers in Gibraltar are encouraged to recognise trade unions. I also think the Government is doing very little in the particular issue that arises of Cammell Laird employing foreign cheap labour as if they were under the guise of detached workers. The Minister needs to do more if he is to be taken seriously on this issue by the unions and the company. However, by his actions and his press release which highlights the fact that there is no legal obligation on Cammell Laird to recognise trade unions, he is creating the perception that he is encouraging the company not to recognise the TGWU."

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