

**STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 38/2007**  
**22 March 2007**

The Opposition welcome Gibraltar's participation as a separate country in the World Swimming championships that are currently taking place in Melbourne, Australia.

There are 194 national swimming federations that belong to FINA, the international swimming federation. The championships include swimming, open water swimming, water polo, diving and synchronized swimming.

It is significant to note that Spain is also participating in this event regardless of the presence and participation of swimmers from Gibraltar. The championships started on 17 March and will continue until 1 April.

The Opposition considers that it is hugely ironic that Spanish swimmers are allowed to compete against Gibraltar swimmers in an international context, while at the same time the Gibraltar Football Association has to continue its fight to be admitted as a full member of UEFA following the pressure exerted by the Spanish Government to keep them out.

This makes the approach taken by the Spanish Football Federation, on instructions from the Spanish Foreign Ministry, totally indefensible.

Commenting on the matter, Acting Shadow Minister for Sport Steven Linares said:

"The Opposition firmly believes that the Spanish Foreign Ministry should stop mixing politics with sport. They should do so by revoking the edict of the Consejo Superior de Deportes which instructs Spanish sporting federations to object to the membership and participation of Gibraltar teams in international sporting associations.

The Consejo Superior de Deportes is an organ of the Spanish Government."

Mr Linares added:

"The Opposition therefore wish our swimmers in Melbourne all the very best in representing their country abroad. I am sure that their participation in an international event will give everyone invaluable experience for the future. What a pity that our football teams continue to be deprived of the same experience by the deplorable attitude of Spain."

**ENDS**