

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

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A passenger travelling by air into London Gatwick from another EU country had his Gibraltar identity card rejected by the immigration authorities at the airport. This latest incident, which happened last week, is one of many which have been reported to the Opposition over the years.

The passenger arrived at Gatwick South Terminal and proceeded to show his identity card to the immigration officer on duty. The immigration officer looked at the card disapprovingly and proceeded to consult another officer who took the same view. The passenger was then asked whether he had a passport with him. He replied in the affirmative and added that the card was a valid travel document. When the immigration officer requested the passport instead, this was produced as the person in question had to catch a connecting flight and could not waste time arguing with the immigration authorities.

Commenting on this latest incident, Shadow Minister responsible for Civil Aviation Dr Joseph Garcia said:

“We take a very serious view of this incident. In other cases, the Gibraltar card has been rejected by individual airlines, which is bad enough for the person trying to check in. In this case the card was rejected by the immigration authorities themselves when the holder was trying to obtain entry into the United Kingdom. This is even worse.

The person in question avoided a considerable amount of disruption because he happened to carry a passport with him. Other passengers who rely exclusively on the validity of the card and do not have their passports with them may not be so lucky in the future.

There is no excuse for more incidents of this kind. It is about time that the pertinent authorities ensure that UK immigration officers are informed that the Gibraltar identity card is a valid travel document within the European Union so that there is no repetition of this incident.”

ENDS