

**STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION**  
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The Opposition considers that the decision taken by Easyjet to reduce the number of flights between Gibraltar and London Gatwick by 40% for next summer is bound to have a negative effect. It also serves to cast further doubt on the wisdom of the policy of the Government to spend millions and millions of pounds on a new air terminal building at a time when some of the airlines using the airport are cutting the number of flights.

This decision also means that that the overall number of flights to London Gatwick next summer will drop by over 60% following the decision taken by British Airways to operate its daily flight from Heathrow instead. The fact that there will be less flights to London in the summer of 2010 than there were in the summer of 2009 flies in the face of what we continue to be told about the success of the Government's tourism marketing campaign.

The new schedule for the summer of 2010 published by Easyjet shows that the number of weekly flights from Gibraltar to Gatwick will be cut from 12 in 2009 to just 7 in 2010. The plan is for a flight to leave Gatwick at 10.00 and arrive in Gibraltar at 13.50 and then leave Gibraltar at 14.25 and arrive in London at 16.10 on weekdays. On weekends the flight will leave Gatwick at 7.15, arrive in Gibraltar at 11.05 and then leave Gibraltar at 11.40 and return to Gatwick at 13.25. It will no longer be possible to leave Gibraltar for Gatwick in the evening. This compares unfavourably with this summer when there was both a morning and an afternoon Easyjet flight on most days of the week.

The announcement of this reduction comes at a time when Andalus Airlines cancelled all their flights between Gibraltar and Barcelona and reduced the frequency of the service to Madrid. It was also made clear at the time that the airline had been flying to the Spanish capital with a load factor of about 35% during the summer months.

Commenting on the matter, Shadow Minister with responsibility for Civil Aviation Dr Joseph Garcia said:

“The reduction in the number of Easyjet flights to Gibraltar in the summer of next year will be a blow to many in the industry who depend on airlines to bring in visitors to Gibraltar and spend money here. Moreover, the latest figures made available to the Opposition for arrivals from the UK show an overall drop in the number of air arrivals for July and August 2009 when compared to the previous year. It is very significant that the numbers should have dropped in the peak months of the year.

It is increasingly obvious, against this background, that the decision taken by the Government to spend such a vast sum of money on the construction of a new air terminal cannot have been based on economic considerations but was instead proceeded with as a sop to Spain regardless of the expense involved and the future use which will be made of the building.”

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