

## **STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION**

**102/2010**

**22 July 2010**

The Mayor of La Linea Alejandro Sanchez has claimed that the measures that he wants to take at the frontier are not aimed against Gibraltar but against the central Government in Madrid. Even though this may be the intention, he must surely understand that the direct effect of the measures will be felt in Gibraltar alone and not in Madrid or anywhere else.

The action involves creating an additional checkpoint for vehicles exiting Gibraltar and the proposed payment of a toll by persons entering Gibraltar by car. The checkpoint, regardless of the legitimacy of the action taken by local police officers of the municipality, is simply designed to increase the length of time that it takes to cross the frontier. The Mayor should realise that there are many Gibraltarians and other residents of Gibraltar who cross into La Linea to spend money there on goods and services. It is obvious that the more difficult the Mayor makes it to cross the frontier, the less residents of Gibraltar will be inclined to spend their money in his city. The actions of the Mayor will therefore do nothing to help La Linea and will have the opposite effect. Indeed, the antipathy and resentment that this will create in Gibraltar is not in the best interests of La Linea or of friendly cross-border relations.

In taking this action, Mr Sanchez is repeating the same mistake made by previous Spanish politicians at a local and national level. There is a tendency in political circles in Spain to believe that the frontier is a chink in Gibraltar's armour and that they can use their control over the flow of people to put pressure on Gibraltar. The lesson of history is that these actions are completely counterproductive and that the more pressure that is placed on Gibraltar the more determined it makes us to resist it.

The Mayor's threats and actions are also rather surprising given the comments he made at the time of his election that this would usher in a new era in relations between Gibraltar and La Linea. The Mayor must know that there are many thousands of Spaniards who come in to earn their living in Gibraltar and many others who provide goods and services. There may well be 10,000 unemployed people in La Linea, as he says, but the truth is that if it were not for Gibraltar there would be many thousands more.