

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

**62/2010**

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The fact that a Gibraltar ambulance has been fined by the Civil Guard in Spain for flashing blue beacon lights instead of orange is symptomatic of the heavy-handed attitude towards Gibraltar evidenced from Spanish officialdom as a whole.

The Opposition understands that at the time of the incident, the ambulance was engaged in an emergency transfer of an elderly patient to Benalmadena. The patient, the nurse and the ambulance crew were made to wait while the Civil Guard proceeded to impose a fine of 150 Euros which was then reduced to 80 Euros on the basis that this was all the money that the driver had.

The Civil Guard in question displayed no common sense in this incident. It would have been much more sensible to have warned the driver, informed him that the law in Spain requires orange beacon lights and not blue and then allow the patient to proceed to hospital. Indeed, if the colour of the lights was so important they could even have offered to escort the ambulance to Benalmadena themselves.

There are a number of documented incidents over the years which show that the Spanish Civil Guard have a record of being unreasonable and excessive when it comes to Gibraltar. These have happened, and continue to happen, both on land and at sea in our territorial waters.

The incident has also served to draw attention to the fact that drivers in Spain have to pay spot fines, whereas the drivers of Spanish registered cars in Gibraltar do not. This means that they park where they like and commit whatever offences they wish secure in the

knowledge that once they cross the border they can rip up the parking ticket or forget about the fine.

Even if an apology were to be offered for this latest incident, it would clearly be a case of too little too late.