



PRESS RELEASE

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Feetham Fails Football Fraternity

HM Government of Gibraltar is disappointed that the Opposition has so little of substance to say about the exciting new plans for Gibraltar's sports facilities. This is in stark contrast to our local sportsmen and women who have inundated the Government with messages of gratitude and support following this week's exciting announcements. These messages have praised the vision, imagination and foresight contained in the plans for the new national stadium, the Europa rugby/cricket pitch, the various sports halls, the 8-lane swimming pool, the athletics track, new Target Shooting ranges, and, of course, the facilities designed for the use of Special Athletes.

Even elements of the Spanish press have been impressed, and sometimes envious, at the scale of these plans and at the timeframe in which the plans will come to fruition. Without doubt this is the biggest ever investment in Gibraltar's sporting facilities - and it isn't costing the tax-payer a penny!

Amongst all this unrestrained enthusiasm there is just one little dissenting voice, that of the GSD who want to claim all the credit for once having suggested that Victoria Stadium should have been expanded. They accuse the Government of a 'U-turn' when, in fact, it is UEFA which has finally agreed that Victoria Stadium could be improved to Category 4 status, having originally told the GFA that the restrictions of site would make such improvements impossible.

Mr Feetham suggests that the last four years have been wasted because the new expanded stadium has not been built. Perhaps he can explain how the stadium could possibly have been built whilst Winston Churchill Avenue is still in use? His plans depended on the closure of that road and of the Cepsa petrol station.

And, of course, the GSD grudgingly admit that their new stadium would have been funded by the tax-payer rather than by UEFA/FIFA. They also fail to point out that their plan would have benefited only football, unlike the Government's plans which provide extra facilities for just about every sport played in Gibraltar and which is inclusive of Special Athletes. There was no mention of Special Athletes in any GSD plans.

So, instead of rejoicing along with everyone else in Gibraltar, Mr Feetham is now sulking in the corner.

Rather than welcome this magnificent initiative, he tries to score a couple of political points. It's the small-minded approach we have come to expect from the Opposition.