



PRESS RELEASE

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It was the GSD who entered into the illegal fishing agreement

The only people lacking credibility on the fishing issue are the GSD. It is incredibly mischievous of the Opposition to make the statement they have just made when they are the party that, when in Government, with its current leader Keith Azopardi as a Minister, created the fishing problem by entering into the illegal fishing agreement.

In the early part of this year, illegal fishing incursions were at an all-time low, thanks largely to the work of the Department of the Environment's Environmental Protection and Research Unit (EPRU). There was an increase in fishing activity from early summer, largely believed to have been an act of deliberate provocation which was possibly linked to the Brexit discussions.

Over the past few weeks and following increased activity at sea from the EPRU, with support from the RGP, illegal incursions have decreased once more. This Government is fully committed to the protection of the marine environment and, as a result, the work of the EPRU will continue.

No Government in Gibraltar's history has done so much in this respect. The Marine Protection Regulations and the designation of Marine Conservation Zones, are just some of the measures that have produced visible results, results which include the fact that our coastline is no longer full of unlicensed anglers from outside Gibraltar leaving no room for our own and the fact that foreign spear-fishermen who were totally unregulated and took large numbers of marine life, no longer do so.

The GSD's press release goes on to say that Government is deliberately misleading the public when, in fact, it is the GSD that is doing so, clearly afflicted by the fake news syndrome. Possibly worse, they may simply not understand what they are being told.

Minister for the Environment, the Hon Prof John Cortes said, "We are still trying to fix the mess the GSD and Mr Azopardi caused with their fishing agreement that allowed Spaniards to fish whilst discriminating against Gibraltarians. That agreement was against the law, it was against the Constitution and it drove a coach and horses through the rule of law. Now we are taking action, we are being non-discriminatory in our approach and we are being as tough as we can be and we cannot be everywhere all the time. But the GSD cannot pretend it is the guardian of our fishing waters



when they granted express permission for Spanish fishermen to fish in our waters. Trevor had better remember that next time he pretends he comes to this with a clean slate.

“His Party, and its current leader in particular, have very dirty hands on this subject. They have zero credibility and they have all of the blame for the problems we are still trying to fix and the behaviour we are trying to redress.”