



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.05 p.m. – 5.33 p.m.

Gibraltar, Monday, 23rd June 2025

Contents

Prayer	3
Order of the Day	3
Confirmation of Minutes	3
Announcements	3
Statement on the agreement of a Treaty between the United Kingdom and the European Union in relation to Gibraltar.	3
Questions for Oral Answer	13
JUSTICE, TRADE AND INDUSTRY	13
Q570/2025 Domestic Abuse Act 2023 – Remaining provisions	13
Q571/2025 Royal Gibraltar Police – Increased resources for Digital Forensics Unit	16
Q572/2025 Prison population – Six-week pilot study	17
Q573-5/2025 Royal Gibraltar Post Office – Data on average waiting time for collection of post/parcels; Average time taken for first/second class post from United Kingdom to Gibraltar; Average delivery time from the date post lands in Gibraltar to delivery to property	18
Q576/2025 Police telephone line – Lack of resilience.....	20
Q577/2025 Category 2 Individuals – Policy objective	20
Q578/2025 Category 2 Individuals (formerly High Net Worth Individuals) – Nationality breakdown	22
Q579/2025 High Executives Possessing Specialist Skills – Breakdown of sectors.....	24

Q580/2025 High Executives Possessing Specialist Skills – Breakdown of total numbers and nationality	25
Q602/2025 HMP Windmill Hill staff – Anti-bullying policy	27
Q603/2025 Taxation – Sympathetic approach to individuals working unsociable hours.....	28
Q604/2025 European Commission – Proposal to de-list Gibraltar from the EU grey-list of finance centres	29
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, CIVIL CONTINGENCIES AND SPORT	30
Q605/2025 Fires (Past 12 months) – Confined to space of origin	30
Q606/2025 Fires (Past 12 months) – Confined to space of origin	30
Q607/2025 Government owned buildings – Portable fire extinguishers	31
Q608/2025 Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service – Evacuation of individuals with mobility issues and/or disabilities	32
Q609/2025 Rooke Site – Fire risk assessments.....	32
Q610/2025 Children’s play parks – Refurbishment plans.....	33
Q611/2025 Europa Sports Complex – Completion of repairs.....	34
Q612/2025 Hockey pitch at Bayside Sports Centre – Refurbishment	35
Q613/2025 Pickleball – Provision of facilities	36
Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism	37
Q614/2025 Tourism strategy – Announcement	37
Q615/2025 Gibraltar Music Festival – Reinstatement.....	38
Q616/2025 Registered as unemployed – Young people between the ages of 16 and 30.....	39
Q617/2025 Registered under sheltered employment – Young people between the ages of 16 and 30.....	41
Q618/2025 Registered within the Training Centre – Young people between the ages of 16 and 30.....	43
Q619/2025 Training Centre – Relocation	46
Adjournment	46
<i>The House adjourned at 5.33 p.m.</i>	46

The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 3.05 p.m.

[MADAM SPEAKER: Hon. Judge K Ramagge GMH *in the Chair*]

[CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: P A Borge McCarthy Esq *in attendance*]

PRAYER

Madam Speaker

Order of the Day

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Clerk: Meeting of Parliament, Monday 23rd of June 2025. Order of Proceedings. (i) Oath of Allegiance. (ii) Confirmation of Minutes - the Minutes of the Sixteenth meeting of the Fifteenth Parliament, which was held on the 21st and 22nd of May 2025.

5

Madam Speaker: May I sign the minutes as correct?

Member: Aye.

10

Madam Speaker signed the Minutes

Clerk: (iii) Communications from the Chair. (iv) Petitions. (v) Announcements. The Hon. the Chief Minister.

15

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Statement on the agreement of a Treaty between the United Kingdom and the European Union in relation to Gibraltar.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): With permission, Madam Speaker, I will now make a statement on the agreement for a treaty between the United Kingdom and the European Union in relation to Gibraltar.

20

On the 12th June, the Deputy Chief Minister and I returned from Brussels having announced the day before that political agreement had been reached with the European Union on a treaty setting out Gibraltar's future relationship with the EU.

25

On that day, I had joined Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, European Commission Vice, President Maros Sefcovic, and the Spanish Foreign Minister, Jose Manuel Albares, in the Berlaymont building, where, together with the Deputy Chief Minister and each party's respective teams, we were able to reach agreement on the last remaining politically sensitive issues.

30 That agreement now clears the way for the completion of the drafting of the legal text of the treaty.

Madam Speaker I cannot emphasise strongly enough the spirit of conviviality, friendship and sheer joy shared by all four delegations in that room on that historic day in Brussels as we shook hands and congratulated each other on the job done.

35 It has been tough, but we got there.

It comes at the back of a tremendous amount of work that we have carried out since the announcement of the Brexit referendum result back on notorious date of the 23rd June 2016 exactly nine years ago today.

40 The period since then has seen us fend off all the challenges we have faced as a Community – not least the not small matter of a world-wide pandemic through which we continued to negotiate and progress.

That included our inclusion in the Withdrawal Agreement under a specific Protocol in November 2018.

45 This was a crucial achievement which meant that Gibraltar, like the United Kingdom, was able to benefit from the continued application of EU law from the date of the eventual entry into force of the Withdrawal Agreement.

That period was from 1st February 2020.

In effect, the period has gone on until now.

50 Our people should never lose sight of the huge value that has provided for personal fluidity and to our economy throughout the lengthy periods of negotiation.

The formal rounds of treaty negotiations started on 11th October 2021.

Since then, there have been no less than 19 formal rounds of negotiations, numerous technical meetings and, more recently, Sherpa meetings and meetings at Ministerial level with the teams from the European Commission and the Spanish Government.

55 In the end, we were in a permanent meeting, in person and on video conferences, that lasted, on and off for seven excruciating days.

And, all throughout these almost 4 years of negotiations, the Gibraltar Government has worked hand in glove with the United Kingdom Government.

60 A sentiment that is shared in both London and Gibraltar is that never before in our common history have we worked so closely with each other and never before has there existed such a level of knowledge of, and support for, Gibraltar across virtually all Whitehall Departments.

My sincere thanks, on behalf of the People of Gibraltar, to the successive Conservative and Labour Prime Ministers, Foreign Secretaries and Ministers that I and my team have worked with in these years.

65 All have been unfailingly loyal to the matters that the Government of Gibraltar variously set out both to achieve and to protect.

I want to particularly thank James Cleverly who worked so closely with me, and, Lord David Cameron and David Lammy who were the two who attended meetings in the new format of four in the Berlaymont each on two successive occasions.

70 With the Davids at my side, little Gibraltar faced the Goliath that is the EU, not with a slingshot but with reasoned argument and the Attorney General's encyclopaedic knowledge of EU law and practice which has been this Community's lifeline in the negotiation.

75 In particular, it is fair and right to single out also the current Minister for Europe, Stephen Doughty, for his remarkable commitment and work on this matter from the days when he was in Opposition and was fully briefed on progress.

Moreover, Madam Speaker, I must commend the many officials in the United Kingdom negotiating team who have become like family to us in the past couple of years.

So much so that finishing this part of this negotiation felt almost like being on the set of the last series of FRIENDS!

80 The treaty that will now emerge, Madam Speaker, is bespoke to Gibraltar's specific needs.
A bespoke agreement was vital to Gibraltar.

For that reason, it was never a desire or an option for my Government to form part of the UK's own treaty with the EU, the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

85 As I have said many times before when I have been pressed on why we were 'left out' of the TCA, the fact is that the TCA delivers the opposite of what Gibraltar wants and needs after Brexit.
I will clearly give a more detailed statement to this House once the treaty text is settled.

Today, I would like to say this.

Ever since we conducted our first Heat Maps, back in the autumn of 2016, on the anticipated effects of Brexit to Gibraltar, it became clear to us that achieving fluidity at Gibraltar's land border
90 with Spain was vital to our economic wellbeing and to our way of life.

It was what people wanted.

It was what businesses were asking us to achieve.

It was what this negotiation had to be all about.

This has, therefore, been the overriding political priority of my Government since then.

95 Only the worst moments of the Covid pandemic have displaced achieving that agreement as the top political priority of my Government since the autumn of 2016.

The treaty therefore focuses on the two key areas of EU law that deliver border fluidity:

The circulation of persons and the circulation of goods.

However, before I turn to that, a word on the key issue: sovereignty.

100 One of the very first clauses of the treaty will be a clause that sets out, in the clearest of ways, that neither the treaty nor any action taken in application of the treaty will prejudice or otherwise affect the respective legal positions of the United Kingdom or Spain with regard to sovereignty and jurisdiction.

I can therefore state, without any caveat, to this House, and with full confidence that nothing
105 in the treaty compromises British sovereignty over Gibraltar.

Not one grain of our land.

Not one drop of our water.

Not one breath of our air.

That was the negotiating objective and it has been achieved.

110 Needless to say, this was the reddest of our negotiating lines and I am glad to report that it has been fully achieved.

You will have heard the words of the Father of the House, the Hon. Sir Joe Bossano, the most stalwart defender of the protection of the British sovereignty of Gibraltar, on *Viewpoint* the National Broadcaster last week and the words of reassurance he expressed there.

115 I need not add anything further to that.

Madam Speaker, on circulation of persons, the treaty will establish a common travel area between Gibraltar and the Schengen Area.

This was our overriding objective and it has been achieved.

120 Border checks at the land border will therefore disappear, both for persons travelling from Gibraltar to Spain and for persons travelling from Spain to Gibraltar.

Gone will be the days when an aggressive Spanish Government or a Rogue Spanish Police Officer being able to strangle our economy by being tougher on passport checks, especially in application of the Schengen Border Code.

125 In fact, the benefit of the absence of those checks shall be enjoyed by ALL residents of Gibraltar, whether you currently have a red ID card or a blue, green or magenta civilian registration card. It shall also be enjoyed by red ID card holders who do not reside in Gibraltar.

We shall all enjoy free access to the Schengen Area in the same way.

We shall all be exempted from the stamping of our passports.

We shall also be exempted from the Entry Exit System and ETIAS (the EU equivalent of the ESTA system in the USA) when they become operational.

That will also apply whenever we travel to the Schengen Area from a third country, for example, on a flight from London to Rome. Schengen IT systems will be configured to recognise our cards.

No visas shall be required by any Gibraltar red ID card holder or resident to travel to the Schengen Area.

Indeed, the benefit of fluidity between Gibraltar and the Schengen Area will be enjoyed also by any visitor to Gibraltar from third countries.

In order to achieve that full level of fluidity, border crossing points shall be set up at the airport and port since once cleared there, a person will enjoy unhindered access to the Schengen Area.

Cumulative Gibraltar and Schengen immigration checks shall therefore be performed there.

All persons arriving in Gibraltar from a non-Schengen country will be subject to the dual immigration controls.

Only Gibraltar will be able to determine who comes in Gibraltar.

A Second Line Schengen Control Area shall be built as an addition to the current terminal.

As previously been announced, it will straddle equidistantly Spain and Gibraltar and it will become a joint operating area for our border guards and those of Spain.

Schengen checks will be carried out principally by automated border control systems.

In the vast majority of cases, this will be the only interaction that a passenger will have with a Schengen check.

The cases where a physical Schengen check may be necessary are very limited, for instance, where there is a technical problem with the automated border control systems, or a Schengen alert is flagged at the automated border control machine.

The Second Line Schengen Control Area will allow Gibraltar and Spanish border guards to carry out follow-up checks wherever necessary.

Our power to grant red ID card is unaffected by the treaty.

The treaty will also make it clear that we will remain responsible for issuing and renewing Gibraltar residence permits.

Since the effect of this part of the treaty is to grant residence permit holders access to the entire Schengen Area, it is necessary and logical for the provisions on residence permits to be based on those, which apply between Schengen States.

All Schengen States are, logically, also themselves required to consult one another when they propose to issue residence permits in their respective countries.

And, in the same way, the treaty will require us to carry out a further consultation with the Schengen States, before we issue or renew residence permits.

The purpose of the consultation on residence permits will be to check whether the applicant poses a threat to any of the Schengen States.

This is exactly the same reason as to why Schengen States are required to consult each other before they issue or renew residence permits.

The threshold is very high and in keeping with that which would, in effect, prevent a citizen of one Member State from establishing themselves in another Member State.

Quite frankly, we would not want a person who fails to pass such a high threshold test to be residing in Gibraltar.

That, Madam Speaker, is the essence of the regime on the circulation of persons.

It will guarantee our economic wellbeing and the way of life we are accustomed to.

It will ensure that the 15,000 cross frontier workers who come to work in Gibraltar will be able to continue to do so and in the best conditions we have ever known, during our time as members of the EU.

This will ensure the stability and growth of important sectors of our economy which depend on frontier workers, such as online gaming and Financial Services.

It will also ensure the provision of our health and Care Services.

And of our Hospitality Services.

The chapter on circulation of persons will also establish security regimes with specific provisions on asylum applications, police cooperation, cooperation with Europol and Eurojust, judicial cooperation in criminal matters, extradition processes, freezing and confiscation of property and exchange of criminal record information.

Madam Speaker, as the father of a gorgeous 7-year-old girl, and two robust, handsome boys 13 and 10, I would not do ANYTHING that would make Gibraltar less safe.

With a new police sub station in the area of the airport and other measures to be implemented, believe me, Gibraltar will be safer than ever under these arrangements.

Not less safe. Safer than ever.

Madam Speaker, the second pillar of the treaty will be a trade agreement that will allow the free flow of goods between Gibraltar and the EU's Customs Union.

All goods imported into Gibraltar will be cleared by an EU customs point that shall be designated in the treaty.

These will include customs points in La Linea and in Algeciras.

Once imported into Gibraltar those goods will be in free circulation here subject only to the payment of the transaction tax (TT).

The transaction tax will effectively replace the current import duty regime that will disappear. It is not a VAT.

EU VAT rules will NOT apply in Gibraltar.

A formula has been agreed whereby Gibraltar will not apply a rate of transaction tax that is lower than the rate of VAT applied by any EU Member State.

That currently stands at 17% in Luxembourg.

We will not move to that rate immediately, but an escalator will be agreed to get us there after a number of years.

A mechanism will also be established whereby a panel of experts will annually assess the effect of the progressive rates being implemented and could recommend if they should go up or go down even then below 17%.

Some goods will benefit from a reduced rate of 5% or no transaction tax at all.

For instance, children's clothing can be rated at 5% TT, Foodstuffs at 0% TT, Pharmaceuticals at 0% TT and Medical equipment at 0% TT amongst many others.

Special customs procedures will also exist, whereby goods brought into Gibraltar but not sold in Gibraltar will benefit from certain exemptions including the non-payment of the transaction tax. Special Customs procedures is the equivalent terminology under EU Law in respect of the free movement of goods as the word we have long been accustomed to, which is bonded or goods in bond.

This will cover bunkering, motor vehicles and ship supplies thereby protecting these important sectors of our economy.

Traders purchasing goods in Spain or elsewhere in the EU will be able to do so VAT-free.

They will then have to pay the relevant transaction tax when they import those goods for sale in Gibraltar.

But there will not be double taxation.

On the other hand, individuals purchasing goods in Spain at a retail level or elsewhere in the EU at a retail level will pay the VAT on those goods in that member state and will not be able to obtain a VAT refund as is the case now.

Our traders will be able to sell their goods to all those coming to Gibraltar with no restrictions or allowances for so long as such goods are for their own personal use.

They will also be able to sell their goods in the EU without the restrictions that have existed in the past and, notably, without having to pay customs duties when entering the EU customs territory.

With regard to third country goods, the EU's Common Customs Tariff shall apply.

This will not, however, apply to goods which are of United Kingdom origin.

This is a consequence of the customs arrangements we are establishing with the EU under the treaty and the fact that, under the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, no tariffs apply on United Kingdom goods being imported into the EU.

Madam Speaker, those are the main pillars of the treaty.

But the treaty will also cover other important areas.

There will be provisions on Environmental protection, Climate Change, Labour and Social Standards, Frontier Workers and Transport.

With respect to air transport, the treaty will open up Gibraltar Airport to flights to and from airports in the European Union.

This means that, for the first time in our history, and directly as a result of these negotiations, we may see commercial flights operated between Gibraltar and places in the EU.

These arrangements therefore take us beyond the short-lived Cordoba arrangements which only provided for flights to Spain.

It is truly remarkable that we have been able to achieve this now that we are outside of the European Union and in a way which does not cross any of our red lines on sovereignty, jurisdiction or control.

We trust that this will put to rest an issue which has plagued Gibraltar's political history ever since Spain first opposed Gibraltar's participation in the EU single sky package of measures close to 40 years ago in 1987.

On that day, together with tens of thousands of our fellow citizens and no doubt many sitting here today I joined the demonstration to say NO to the then Airport Agreement.

What we have agreed crosses none of the concerns that all our people had then.

This area of policy and negotiation was ably led, Madam Speaker, by my dear friend the Deputy Chief Minister whose tenacity, understanding and skill on this issue was recognised by all around the table – not least and especially by those sitting opposite us as well as those sitting alongside us.

Madam Speaker, the Gibraltar team has been extraordinary in its ability, capacity and resilience.

I exclude myself when I say that Gibraltar should be proud of how its team has delivered in this negotiation.

The Deputy Chief Minister and all current and former Ministers, the Attorney General, our representative in Brussels, the Chief Secretary, the current and former Chief Secretaries, the current and former Financial Secretaries and Collector of Customs, all have been more than equal to the tasks.

This has been hugely important work and they have all delivered.

As the conductor of the Gibraltar orchestra, my work has been to bring that work together but it is their work that must be recognised.

I could not have done my part without my magnificent team at No 6 who put up with so much travel, so much inability to deal with the day-to-day because of the negotiation and so much diary upheaval as a result of the need to move at the last minute.

My deepest gratitude to all of them.

Indeed, I want to thank all who have played a role in supporting me and the Deputy Chief Minister in this negotiation and leading us to what can only realistically be described as a very positive result for Gibraltar.

Madam Speaker, I acknowledge that in the absence of a final treaty text there will be many questions, of course.

Madam Speaker, the Government set up an email address to receive the queries of citizens about the agreement.

That address UKEUTreaty@gibraltar.gov.gi has already received almost 1,000 emails.

The Chief Secretary is already working to marshal responses to all queries and publish an FAQ based on the most frequently asked questions coming into that address.

Madam Speaker, for all of the reasons above, I commend this statement and the agreement it refers to, to this House and most importantly to the People of Gibraltar.

Madam Speaker: All right, I am going to allow any questions there may be for the purposes of clarification, but I would just flag that despite this being a matter of such high public interest, I am going to caution the House against this becoming a debate, certainly at this stage. But any questions?

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, yes—and in the normal way that these things have happened before—with some introductory remarks, if I may, on a matter of this public importance.

Because, as we have said, when this matter—the political agreement—was announced last Wednesday, on the 11th... I am trying to calculate when that was, because it seems an eternity ago, but it was only the 11th of June. We greeted that with a cautious welcome on the basis that there has now been a political agreement, and you need to get through the political agreement before you get to the treaty text.

But, you know, the Chief Minister ended commending the agreement to the House—and I assume he means the political agreement—because he talks about him conducting an orchestra. But until the fat lady sings and the treaty text is signed, sealed, and delivered, there is no treaty.

And he invites questions, and yet the accuracy of the answers will depend on the final treaty text, which is not yet available. So, we cautiously welcome the political agreement because we all want a safe and beneficial agreement for Gibraltar.

It is clear that they have tentatively made that assessment already because, of course, they have seen the draft treaty text. We have not. And we have made clear that we suspend our judgement on whether it is safe and beneficial—and whether the concerns and red lines that we have, have been met—until such time as the treaty text is published and we are able to make that assessment. Nothing in the statement today changes that position.

Indeed, there is quite a lot in the statement today in terms of giving highlights of possible content of the treaty text. But again, I make the observation that those things would need to be tested on the basis of the treaty text.

And indeed, I note also that there are a number of precise questions on the Order Paper filed by the Opposition, and I will defer to asking supplementaries and clarification matters on those questions so as not to pre-empt or anticipate those questions. Also, because I feel it is the right place to seek greater clarification with greater latitude from the Chair—from Madam Speaker—on those issues.

I will ask for clarification on a couple of things that are not in the statement and are not in the questions that I filed in the House in anticipation of this meeting of the House. I would be grateful if the Chief Minister would give us some understanding and greater clarity on that.

Because he has said to me privately—and indeed publicly—that there would be a debate in this House once the treaty text happens. Now, can he give us an understanding of two things?

First, the kind of timescales that people are aiming for in the conclusion process of the treaty text, given his knowledge of the internal negotiations and the state of the draft so far.

And can he give us an assurance—when he gives us guidance on the kind of timescales, not only for the conclusion of the treaty text but also perhaps some assessment of when he thinks there could, after a treaty text, be a debate in Parliament—can he give us an assurance that we will have sufficient time to study the text before we are here to debate a motion urging the United Kingdom to ratify the treaty text?

After all, this is—as he has put it himself—an important moment for Gibraltar. Perhaps today he has put it in rather more glorious levels of hyperbole than he has on other occasions in this House, where he has chosen a rather more negative context of description.

But irrespective of that—because we cannot reach a conclusion on where we lie on that issue, because we suspend our judgement—can he give us an assurance that we will have sufficient time

to study the text before we come to this motion on the debate, on the substantive debate on this matter, and some assessment of when he thinks the long-standing negotiations will be concluded with a treaty text that we can all pore over?

340 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I guess I am grateful for what the hon. Gentleman describes as his “cautious welcome”—although, as ever with the hon. Gentleman, I find that caution to be so caveated as to almost gut the welcome. But I guess, Madam Speaker, one should not be surprised that that is the attitude the hon. Gentleman is taking.

I will compare it to the response he made in 2006, when the party he now leads brought the
345 Cordoba Agreement and, within 24 hours, he condemned it and said he would not accept it, etc., etc. Therefore, in the context of that, Madam Speaker, I guess this is really positive—and therefore I cannot but cautiously welcome the cautious welcome. Although, of course, he will allow me to caveat my welcome in the way that he has caveated his.

350 The hon. Gentleman was briefed by me and by the Deputy Chief Minister on the 10th, before the Foreign Secretary arrived. We gave him an indication of what was going to happen, and he knows that he is no stauncher defender of the sovereignty of Gibraltar than Joseph Garcia, and he is no stauncher defender of the sovereignty of Gibraltar than Sir Joe Bossano. Let us all say that we are at least as staunch defenders of the sovereignty of Gibraltar.

355 Therefore, I would commend to him that if someone who has seen those elements of the texts that exist—namely, the Deputy Chief Minister and the Father of the House—is able to be a little more forthcoming in the welcome they give subject, of course, to all of the texts and how it hangs together, which we must all await, then perhaps he might wish to be a little less caveated in the caution with which he couches his welcome.

360 Because, Madam Speaker, I do not believe that when he has talking about an assessment of concerns and red lines, his red lines are more scarlet than ours, or that his concerns are in any way going to be greater than ours. Let us just say, at least for now, that our red is just as scarlet, that our blood runs just as red—not ideologically, at least in terms of the sovereignty of Gibraltar—and that we would all have set out to achieve the same things at least.

365 Therefore, he need not concern himself, Madam Speaker, with checking the accuracy of answers that I have given to questions—or that may be given to citizens to their questions—against the treaty text, as if he were somehow set up with a mandate to check our work. I do not think there is anything in the role of the Opposition which is to check the work of the Government in giving answers to citizens against a treaty text.

370 As the hon. Gentleman will know—indeed, as a number of the hon. Members on the opposite side will know—a treaty text is a legal text. And like every legal text, it will be open to as many interpretations as there are lawyers reading it, let alone parties to the treaty.

Lawyers reading it, Madam Speaker—therefore, the hon. Gentleman will allow me to be a little sceptical when I hear the things he has to say, whether now in answer to my statement or on the front page of today’s newspaper.

375 Madam Speaker, in very few places in the world do 32,000 people say that they welcome something but that they want to read the treaty text. It will be thousands of pages. It will require a deep understanding of European law in order to be interpreted. There will be a treaty text which will be hundreds of pages; there will be annexes which will be thousands of pages. There is jurisprudence in respect of all of that European law, and you need to understand all that.

380 Because, as hon. Members will know, when you read a word in a contract, you need to know how that word has been interpreted by the courts, and you need to know what lies behind that word in order to know what it is that that word actually means.

385 So, although I am very respectful of all of my citizens and co-citizens of Gibraltar who wish to see the treaty text before making a judgement, it is also true, Madam Speaker, that you need to have the level of knowledge of European law that the Attorney General and the representative in Brussels have to be able to determine that.

But, as I have heard the hon. Gentleman say before, it'll be no problem for him—because he can read thousands of pages overnight, as he has used to doing in his litigation practice. So, I can assure him, Madam Speaker, they will have at least overnight to consider the treaty before we bring it to this House for a debate.

That, Madam Speaker, should be more than enough, given what the hon. Gentleman has said before. In fact, there will be plenty more time than just overnight, Madam Speaker. As I have said before on a number of occasions publicly—and I will repeat here in the House, for Hansard, as I have said in the House already and is in Hansard—the Government's view is that the treaty text, when published, will be taken by the Government to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet will then consider the final treaty text and make a determination on whether or not it is acceptable to Gibraltar. Once the Cabinet has made that determination, the Government will then lay a motion for a resolution seeking that the United Kingdom should start the process of ratification. That will kick off the process for ratification, Madam Speaker.

It will be, in the lexicon of the times of the Withdrawal Agreement and the TCA of the United Kingdom, an amendable motion. The Government would not bring an unamendable motion. That is to say, if the Cabinet has made the decision that we seek the ratification of the treaty, we will put the motion. The motion will say that this House do seek that—in whatever language we consider appropriate—that the United Kingdom Government should start the process of ratification of the treaty.

Of course, it will be open to the Leader of the Opposition—as no doubt he will seek to do—to say that the resolution should be amended to say that the United Kingdom should not seek the ratification of the treaty, because he would be able to do a better job if he had been Chief Minister. And no doubt, if he has elected as Chief Minister at the next General Election, he will be able to go back and negotiate a better treaty, etc., etc., etc.

I have no doubt that we will get into that, Madam Speaker, at the appropriate moment. And I have no doubt—Madam Speaker, I have no doubt—that that is what he will do. I mean, he will not surprise me by voting in favour of the motion that the Government brings, if we bring it. They do not vote in favour of the Budget, Madam Speaker, so I cannot see them voting in favour of the motion for the treaty.

They will find the fifth leg of the cat in a comma or in a full stop. There will not be a devil—because the Cabinet will not approve a treaty text with a devil in it—but they will find the devil where there is not one, and they will vote against it.

So, hon. Members should have absolutely no doubt: they will have sufficient time, with a published treaty text, to confect a devil where there is not one, to justify amending the motion that the Government will bring into the negative rather than the positive.

If they do not do that, Madam Speaker—hope springs eternal. Hope springs eternal. But they have not surprised me in the time that I have been in the House, in the way that they have addressed the issues that we have brought to this House.

So, it will be a full debate, Madam Speaker. Everybody will have an opportunity to speak. But it will only happen—and this is the emphasis I want to bring—it will only happen if the Cabinet, which includes all of the members here, including of course the Deputy Chief Minister and the Father of the House, Madam Speaker, have approved every word of the treaty text.

So, Madam Speaker, they will have sufficient time to consider it. They will have sufficient time to look at what their position is. And they will have sufficient time to justify whatever their position is.

As a litigation lawyer, able to read—as he told us—thousands of pages in one night, I doubt that he will need more than a few hours to find the reason why.

Madam Speaker, he will forgive me if he says today that I have risen to glorious levels of hyperbole—but he says that all the time, Madam Speaker. He says that about what I say about the economy. He says that about what I say about any contract that the Government might enter into—about anything that the Government does.

I hope he does not say it, Madam Speaker, about how beautiful I think my daughter is—but he says it about everything else that I do. He says that I spin everything. He says that I exaggerate everything. He says that all the time, Madam Speaker.

Well, look—others will judge whether what I say is reliable or not. On four occasions, they have decided it is. On two occasions, they have preferred my version to his. In addition, they are not going to get another chance to choose between us, Madam Speaker. So, we might just consider that done.

Can I therefore invite him to leave that behind and just look at what we are saying, rather than how we are saying it—because that is not the issue.

Comparing what I am saying today, Madam Speaker—after we have done an agreement, although we have not yet done a treaty—to what I said when we were in the throes of the negotiation seems to me, with the very greatest respect to the hon. Gentleman, a little foolish.

Because, as he would know—or at least I think he should know—everything I said before the 11th of June was said with an eye to the negotiation. Everything I said, everywhere I said it, was said with an eye to the negotiation—even references to fertiliser.

He needs to understand that. I would have thought he did understand that, because it is not as if the negotiation was in the Berlaymont or in Carlton Gardens in London. You left the negotiation, and your negotiating counterparts then went off and did their thing and did not follow every single word you said.

Let us just say, in public at least, about the negotiation and what you might or might not do next. So, he cannot—if he is being faithful to doing a proper analysis of this—compare what I might have said in the throes of the negotiation to what I am saying now that the negotiation is complete qua the political agreement.

Of course, that is what I have welcomed—not the treaty text. Although I have seen a lot of treaty texts, and I believe that the treaty text that we have seen is the treaty text that would have had devils in it. And we have negotiated the I's, the T's, the commas, and the full stops of the text that would have had the devils in it—which needs to be seen in the whole suite of clauses that will make up the treaty.

We have seen a lot of that already. But I welcome, of course, the agreement. I cannot welcome the treaty text that does not exist as a full suite of documents.

Madam Speaker, other than that, I am not again going to be drawn on timing. I am not going to be drawn on timing now, just as I have resisted being drawn on timing for the past four years.

Because even now, when we hope that the treaty text will be completed towards the end of the summer or the autumn—and we hope that, during the course of the autumn, we may be able to see it published, we may be able to see it debated, we may be able to see the process of ratification start—we would wish that perhaps that might be over at the very latest by the end of the autumn or the winter.

We might hope. Even now, it is important to always remember that what matters more is substance, not timing.

It would be foolish indeed, for anybody to say, “It must be done by this date,” as the hon. Gentleman has repeatedly invited me to do. Because the minute you do that, you start to put a cheese wire against your neck, which starts to cut against you in that negotiation.

I have resisted his entreaty to tie a cheese wire around the neck of the people of Gibraltar for the past four years—perhaps to my personal political loss—but the people of Gibraltar matter more, and I will not have a cheese wire anywhere near their necks.

I hope that is helpful.

Madam Speaker: Any other questions not statements we have had statements now any other questions? None? All right.

Questions for Oral Answer

490

JUSTICE, TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Q570/2025

Domestic Abuse Act 2023 – Remaining provisions

Clerk: (vi) Papers to be laid, (vii) Reports of Committees, (viii) Answers to Oral Questions.
Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

495

Question 570, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the Hon. A. Sanchez.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: With regard to the remaining provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act 2023, could the Government clarify:

500

- (a) what housing-related issues are contributing to the delay in implementing Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders;
- (b) what steps are being taken to address these issues;
- (c) when the Government expects the remaining provisions of the Act to come into force?

505

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice Trade and Industry.

510

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Madam Speaker, before the Hon. Minister replies, I am conscious that Miss Norton is not in the House today for reasons that she has indicated to the Chair and to us. I just want to—sorry, Norton Sanchez is not in the House today for reasons that she has indicated to you and to me as Leader of the House, and which involve her health. I just want to say, on behalf of all Members on the Government side—and no doubt joined by all Members on the other side—that we wish Atrish a very, very speedy recovery. We hope that she joins us very, very soon indeed, even if it is for us to vehemently disagree with her. She is an important Member of this House, and we very much look forward to seeing her amongst us very, very soon indeed. All the best from all of us.

515

Madam Speaker: Yes, I very much echo that sentiment and wish her all the very best.

520

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, the Government recognises the benefit that bringing into force the remaining elements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2023 would bring, in particular the introduction to Gibraltar of domestic abuse protection notices and orders. However, as was previously stated in this House, legal advice has made clear that before these powers can be introduced, alternative accommodation must be made available for those temporarily removed from their residence by means of a domestic abuse protection notice.

525

Unfortunately, due to the limited housing stock available, and the housing system—which, as the hon. Member is aware, is based on a well-established points-based system to ensure fairness for those waiting for homes—I have recently been informed that no dedicated housing stock can be made available for this at this time.

530

As the hon. Member will appreciate, this is a complex issue. Legal advice is being sought as to whether it is viable to commence the portions of the Act providing for the introduction of domestic abuse protection orders separately and without any constitutional issues. If this is found to be an option, a consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the local Bar, the Royal

Gibraltar Police, the Judiciary, and the Care Agency, will be undertaken prior to a decision being taken as to whether this further limited commencement would be beneficial.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Madam Speaker, can I first say, on behalf of Miss Sanchez, for whom I am taking this question, that I am sure she would be grateful for—and indeed has already thanked—the Chief Minister and Madam Speaker privately for their own acknowledgements of her communication to the Chair, where she explained the medical reasons for her absence. I am sure she would be very grateful for the comments that have been made so far today.

Can I ask the Minister, on this question: what is the size of the problem? He explains that this is all about having to provide alternative accommodation and that there is no dedicated housing stock. But what is the anticipated size of the problem that is holding up the commencement of this legislation? In terms of how many housing cases is he expecting? Is there an estimate of that?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I do not have that information available to me at present.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: When the Minister says he does not have the information at present, does he mean that the information exists but he does not have it with him? That there has been an estimate? Or that there hasn't been an estimate?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I do not have that information available to me because that information has not been available to me as Minister for Justice. I do not have that information.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, I am keen not to go round in circles. When the Minister says it is not available to him as Minister for Justice, is it that it has not been done, but it is available to another Ministerial colleague? Is there an assessment?

Hon. N Feetham: I do not know Madam Speaker is the frank answer.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Perhaps he can ask the hon. Lady sitting to his immediate right, who I assume would be the person who might have the information, whether there is an assessment—I do not know. But can I ask him also, in terms of the C question—the answer to the C question which he gave—so they are trying to assess whether there is any viability to commence this separately, and if so, there is going to be a consultation exercise. That sounds like it is going into the long grass. Is there any expectation, at least in terms of his unblocking the first question—the viability question?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, nothing is being pushed into the long grass. This is the information that has been made available to the Ministry. We are taking legal advice, and the legal advice, certainly that we have, is that there are constitutional issues. So I have gone back to the Government's legal advisors and I have asked the question: is there a way that we can introduce part of the provisions without a constitutional issue being created? That is the advice that we are waiting for.

Madam Speaker, in relation to the hon. Member's previous question—that I should refer the question to the Minister for Housing on my right—well, Madam Speaker, if they want to table a question in Parliament, they should table a question directly to the Minister for Housing. Or is it, Madam Speaker, that she has doing such a great job that in this session—I know there are no questions to the Housing Minister—that can only be the answer?

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Well, Madam Speaker, the question actually directs the question of—it is not my question, it is the Hon. Miss Sanchez's question—but the question is to the Government. I am asking the Minister for Justice. The Minister for Justice has chosen to answer it. The question is to the Government. If I ask the Government, is it in possession of an estimate, then I am

expecting a Governmental answer. I am not expecting a ring-fenced answer, as if they are a different solar system of planets. I am dealing with one Government, presumably.

590 But let me ask him on this question—this is fine-tuned because he has the one taking the advice. He says that he has taking advice as to the viability of proceeding with the commencement, subject to the legal advice. Does he have an assessment of when he will be in a position to take that view?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, in answer to his last question—no, I do not. I am not in a position to be able to say when we will receive that advice. But certainly, when I go back to the office, I will follow up with the Ministry and ask whether or not we are expecting the advice to be delivered over the next two weeks.

600 But I am really perplexed, Madam Speaker. He has asked a question and I have given him an answer, but he keeps insisting that I should defer to the Minister for Housing. Let him table a question in this House to the Minister for Housing, and I am sure that the Minister for Housing will provide it—but without notice of the question, Madam Speaker, she is not in a position to do so.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: But with respect—I am not inviting him for a second time. I did not—if he actually hears what I actually said, instead of wanting me to say something that I did not, and then building an answer as a castle in the air—I did not ask him again to ask the Minister for Housing.

605 I said that the question was posed to the Government, and my supplementary was posed to the Government. Is the Government in a position to tell me whether there was an estimate? The Government has chosen that, in this particular regard, the Minister for Justice is giving the answer. I expect a Governmental answer. I do not expect a ring-fenced answer. That is the question I was putting. Did he not understand my question?

610

Hon. N Feetham: I do not think he has actually asked a question.

Madam Speaker: I believe the Hon. J Ladislaus had a question.

615 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, we have heard from the Hon. Minister and I believe that he has answered this question before in past sessions in the same manner—that there is a constitutional issue and that there is not enough housing stock.

620 Nevertheless, I put to the Hon. Minister: at the moment, as it stands, in these cases usually bail conditions are set, and bail conditions usually dictate that a potential perpetrator or somebody who has been arrested and booked for court cannot reside with the complainant. So, therefore, what makes this scenario any different? Or is it that there are other issues of a constitutional significance that we are not hearing about?

625 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, when I have the advice, I am quite happy to share that advice with the hon. Lady opposite. I do not have that advice.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

630

635

Q571/2025

**Royal Gibraltar Police –
Increased resources for Digital Forensics Unit**

Clerk: Question 571, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

640 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Are there plans to provide the RGP with increased resources for its digital forensics unit, which is currently under-resourced?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

645 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, the Royal Gibraltar Police has no plans to increase the current complement of officers in its digital forensic unit. Where necessary, the RGP outsources some forensic work to specialist providers. This ensures the organisation remains able to meet increasing demands with existing resources.

650 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Is it the case, therefore, that it is not accepted that there is a higher demand for more officers within that unit, and that it is under-resourced, is the Hon. Minister accepting that point?

655 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, all I can say is that the Acting Commissioner of Police actually provided the answer that I have given. Therefore, he does not seem to accept that his unit is under-resourced. To the extent that the arrangements currently in place for outsourcing services to third parties are concerned, he seems to take the view that those arrangements are perfectly acceptable. That is an operational decision for the RGP, Madam Speaker, not for the Minister for Justice.

660 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Commissioner Ullger stated specifically that there was a shortage of police officers within that unit. Is it the case now, therefore, that the RGP's position is different on that, or is it the same.

665 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, the position is as I have read out in my answer to the previous question.

670 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** So, Madam Speaker, I put it again, therefore: if work has been outsourced because there are not enough officers, by implication, does the Hon. Minister accept that there is an under-resourcing issue within that unit of the RGP?

675 **Hon. N Feetham:** No, I do not accept the premise of the question, Madam Speaker, because it is perfectly legitimate for the Commissioner of Police and the RGP to decide to outsource certain services to a third party. I think that is a legitimate position for the RGP to take. But these are operational issues, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

680

Q572/2025
Prison population –
Six-week pilot study

Clerk: Question 572, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

685 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** When did the six-week pilot study into prison pathways and access to therapeutic support for the prison population commence; has that pilot study concluded and if the study has concluded please provide details as to its findings and recommendations?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

690

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, I am informed that the six-week pilot scheme commenced in or around April 2024 and ended in June 2024. The study provided insight into the clinical needs of the prison population and made the following findings and recommendations:

695

1. Prisoners should feel heard and be listened to, and have an opportunity to vent to improve well-being and reduce distress whilst in prison. It was concluded that this does not need to be delivered by qualified psychological practitioners.
2. Psychological input to reduce risk of reoffending and support rehabilitation—for example, targeting criminogenic needs and risk factors through offender behaviour programmes. It was noted that the Care Agency has designed and delivered interventions to meet these needs on a group and individual basis. It was further noted that it would be unusual for healthcare providers to deliver such interventions.
3. No issues were identified regarding interventions in relation to substance misuse.
4. The possibility of the GHA providing a clinic for evidence-based psychological therapies for mental health conditions, if and when required, would be explored.
5. Support staff should understand challenging behaviours in custody from a psychological perspective and make recommendations to enhance standard practice.

700

705

710

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, in respect of the Psychological Services to be possibly provided by the GHA, how long will that exploration take? Do we have a timeframe within which the viability of that will be assessed for implementation?

715

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, in terms of supplementary information, the information that I have is that, as a result of the six-week programme, Mr Kevin Galliano was assigned by the Care Agency as a counsellor for this purpose. I am also told that both the GHA and Care Agency provide the necessary support and tools for inmates to address any substance abuse and behavioural issues that they may have.

720

Hon. J Ladislaus: The current arrangements will be put in place to deal with substance abuse issues and behavioural issues—is there anything else that these counselling services seek to deal with, for example, past traumas?

725

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I assume that the answer is yes, but I do not have that information available to me.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

730

Q573-5/2025

Royal Gibraltar Post Office –

Data on average waiting time for collection of post/parcels; Average time taken for first/second class post from United Kingdom to Gibraltar; Average delivery time from the date post lands in Gibraltar to delivery to property

Clerk: Question 573, the Hon. C Sacarello

735 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Does the Post Office record data on the average waiting time for the collection of post and parcels in Parcel Post and if so, please could the Minister kindly provide a breakdown of such data?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

740 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 574 and 575.

Clerk: Question 574, the Hon. C Sacarello.

745 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Please could the Minister provide us with the average time taken for post (1st class and 2nd class) to arrive in Gibraltar from the UK?

Clerk: Question 575, the Hon. C Sacarello.

750 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Please could the Minister provide us with the average delivery time taken from date post lands in Gibraltar to post being delivered to property?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

755 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, in answer to Question 573, there is no recording of data with regards to average waiting times at the parcel Post Office. Waiting times are subjective and dependent on the number of customers collecting and the items being collected at the same time. In addition, these may be compounded if there is a need for payment or HM Custom's intervention.

760 In answer to Question 574, first class and second class postage refers to different tiers of letter post services offered by Royal Mail in the United Kingdom for domestic mail. Mail flow to Gibraltar is not considered domestic mail by Royal Mail, but rather international mail. Therefore, these class tiers are not relevant for the purposes of outgoing mail to Gibraltar, and all international letter mail items are treated with the same expediency. Based on the latest information provided by
765 Royal Mail, their aim is for international letter mail items to reach their destined postal operator between three and seven working days from the time it is posted. However, this may not always be the case due to operational reasons at their end.

In answer to Question 575, the Royal Gibraltar Post Office processes mail as soon as it arrives in Gibraltar and prepares it for delivery the next day. In certain circumstances, there may be
770 operational delays, and the post will then be delivered the day after.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, with regards to Question 573, does the Minister see the relevance in obtaining this type of information?

775 **Hon. N Feetham:** Yes ma'am.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker in which case would the Hon. Minister please explain to the House why this information is not recorded or not taken down despite him seeing the relevance.

780 **Hon. N Feetham:** Yes, Madam Speaker, I do see the relevance. But in answer to the question, I have been told by the Post Office that they certainly do not keep the data. I intend to go back and sit down with the Post Office management and raise this. The reality is that there are a list of issues at the Post Office, Madam Speaker. I mean, the hon. Member does not need to come to this House and debate and lecture the hon. Members on this side of the House. Of course there
785 are issues and I intend to sit down with the management team and indeed the Chief Secretary, Madam Speaker, who used to be the Senior Managing Director of the Post Office before he became Chief Secretary, in order to see how we tackle some of the issues that have surfaced since he departed his office, Madam Speaker.

790 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Indeed, Madam Speaker, the Chief Secretary does have a lot of experience of the Post Office, but also the private sector. And in that private sector work ethic, he will understand—as I am sure he will explain to the Minister—that the importance of customer service and delivery is key.

So my question, Madam Speaker, to the Minister is: despite the fact that these questions were
795 tabled a few months ago and the Minister has had plenty of time to converse, why does the Minister not give enough regard to the fact that people are waiting in the heat of the summer for perhaps longer than an efficient and effective system would deem necessary? And at busy times such as Christmas, if the postal services are not recording the data, then they are not focused on delivering a service which the public deserves. Will the Minister not agree with our
800 recommendation that this is reviewed and that a study is conducted to improve the service to the public?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I do not agree that there is a need for a study. I agree that, certainly, issues have to be addressed, and we are in the process of addressing these issues. As to
805 whether or not we are insensitive to customer care—I do not agree with him. I told him in the last session of Parliament, Madam Speaker, that I do go down to the Post Office myself, and I sit down and I see exactly for myself what the realities are on the ground.

I have also explained to him, I think in answer to a previous question, that certainly when I have been there, I have not seen some of the issues which have since been ventilated in social
810 media. In terms of resourcing, I am very happy to report to this House that we have increased resourcing during summer at the Post Office. What we have done is we have taken on a number of students who are doing sterling work at the Post Office.

I am also very happy to report to this House, Madam Speaker, that the vacancies that we said we were opening are now open, and that interviews will take place within, I think, two weeks'
815 time. So we ought to be seeing the five or eight supply worker positions that we have announced—we ought to be seeing those positions in place within the next six weeks or so, Madam Speaker.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I commend the Minister for recruiting students during the
820 summer—those jobs are much welcomed, I am sure, on behalf of the students. But I did not hear the Minister's reply to a commitment to looking at the systems and overhauling whatever needs to be overhauled to provide a better service to the public. Will the Minister commit to that?

Hon. N Feetham: I am committing to a review of the system. I have already said that we will
825 be sitting down with the Chief Secretary and we will be looking at this, because I share the concerns of the public in this particular area. I do not shy away from that fact in saying this to this House.

830 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Now, on to Question 574—actually, no further question on that one.

Madam Speaker: Next Question.

835
Q576/2025
Police telephone line –
Lack of resilience

Clerk: Question 576, the Hon. C Sacarello.

840 **Hon. C Sacarello:** Is the Minister worried about the lack of resilience with the police telephone lines following their failure as a result of the 8th April 2025 power outage?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

845 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, the power outage of the 8th of April 2025 highlighted an issue with the backup systems meant to provide continuity of service by the Royal Gibraltar Police on such occasions. Madam Speaker, I expect that the issue will be resolved, and I am happy to brief the hon. Member behind the Speaker's chair on this matter, as it involves matters which may not be disclosed, at this stage, in public.

850 **Hon. C Sacarello:** At this stage, in public—thank you, Madam Speaker. I would just like to thank the Minister for that, and I will take him up on the offer.

Q577/2025
Category 2 Individuals –
Policy objective

855 **Clerk:** Question 577, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Does the Government have a policy objective of increasing the numbers of Category 2 Individuals who relocate to Gibraltar?

860 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

865 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, Category 2 status is an established and important part of Gibraltar's tax framework, designed to attract high-net-worth individuals who contribute positively to the jurisdiction. The Government is reviewing the regime to ensure it remains competitive, compliant, and aligned with Gibraltar's long-term strategic objectives and evolving international standards. Any changes will be subject to consultation and aimed at preserving Gibraltar's attractiveness as a place to live and invest, while adhering to international best practices.

870 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Does the Minister accept that the number of Category 2 individuals—because of the nature of those individuals—is a worthwhile indicator of the amount of inward investment that there might be in Specialized Financial Services?

875 **Hon. N Feetham:** Partly so, Madam Speaker. Partly so. But I would not say that it is determinative—it is partly so, yes.

880 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Well, I mean, the Minister—indeed, it would be partly so, because it would be an indicator, not the only indicator, but an indicator of people coming to Gibraltar to relocate of a specific net worth. They then contribute to the economy in a number of ways. But the Minister will know that in February 2012, the number of Category 2 individuals in Gibraltar was approximately 340, and in April 2025, it is 315. Can you explain why, over 13 years, the number of Category 2 individuals has dropped rather than risen, in terms of the indicator of the growth of financial services?

885 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, I think the premise of the question is flawed, and I will explain why. During my time in private practice—I practised for 32 years—I believe I have a very good knowledge of the financial services sector and indeed the gaming sector. The number of Category 2 individuals that actually came to Gibraltar to set up financial services entities or substantive entities in Gibraltar were a minority. From recollection, they were a minority. The very large number of Category 2 individuals that chose to apply for residence in Gibraltar were not coming to Gibraltar in order to set up financial services or gaming businesses in Gibraltar. The shareholders were therefore not resident in Gibraltar.

895 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Can he give us a bit more information about the expected process that he has talking about and the consultation exercise that he spoke about in his original answer?

900 **Hon. N Feetham:** Yes, and I perhaps ought to address more specifically the question that the hon. Member asked previously. I think he referred to figures in 2012. But, Madam Speaker, again, it is misleading on the basis of benchmark figures to make an assessment of the sort that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition was making. Because you could also interpret the figures as actually saying that when they were in office—because I assume that is the point the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is trying to make—that there were more Category 2 individuals registered in Gibraltar. Well, maybe there were more Category 2 individuals registered in Gibraltar, Madam Speaker, because they were far more lax in allowing people to come to Gibraltar, and therefore the quality of the application system is much higher now. That could also be an alternative interpretation.

905 Madam Speaker, he has now asked a question in relation to when we will be in a position to embark on a consultation. I think we need to have a discussion at Cabinet level to make a decision around what the Category 2 product should be going forward. And perhaps the hon. Member will remember that the original iteration of the rules was first implemented in Gibraltar in 1992, when the Father of the House was the then Chief Minister, as a result of recommendations made by Price Waterhouse Coopers in the so-called Price Waterhouse Coopers Report. There have been a number of iterations ever since. The last, I think, substantive iteration of the rules was conducted when the hon. Member was then in Government.

915 I think there is a need now to take stock of where we are, particularly with regards to the Schengen Treaty. We will become probably, Madam Speaker, one of the most attractive—if not the most attractive—fiscal locations within the Schengen area. To that extent, I think the Government needs to decide whether or not we increase the threshold for entry into Gibraltar. There are those in the finance centre that are asking us—and have been asking us—to do so over 920 the last 18 months. But, Madam Speaker, we have held back from taking a decision until we knew where we stood with the Treaty.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

925

Q578/2025

**Category 2 Individuals (formerly High Net Worth Individuals) –
Nationality breakdown**

Clerk: Question 578, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

930 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, can the Government provide a nationality breakdown of Category Two individuals, formerly high-net-worth individuals, as of 1 May 2025? And are any of these registered Gibraltarians, and if so, how many?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

935

940 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** As of 1 May 2025, there were a total of 315 individuals classified as Category Two, formerly high-net-worth individuals. The largest group by nationality was British, accounting for 133 individuals (42.2%). Other nationalities with notable representation include Dutch (6.7%), French (5.1%), Russian (4.8%), Swiss (4.4%), and Israeli (4.1%). Of these, 35 individuals—representing 11.1% of the total Category 2 —are registered Gibraltarian holders of red ID cards. Madam Speaker, the specific breakdown by nationality is in the schedule I now hand over.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 578

Nationality	Total Count	Percentage
Dutch	1	0.3%
Algerian	1	0.3%
American	7	2.2%
Argentinian	1	0.3%
Austrian	2	0.6%
Belgian	6	1.9%
Bolivian	1	0.3%
Brazilian	3	1.0%
British	133	42.2%
Bulgarian	1	0.3%
Canadian	8	2.5%
Chinese	2	0.6%
Croatian	1	0.3%
Cypriot	1	0.3%
Czechia	1	0.3%
Danish	4	1.3%
Dutch	21	6.7%
Estonian	1	0.3%
French	16	5.1%
German	5	1.6%
Hungarian	3	1.0%
Indian	4	1.3%
Irish	5	1.6%
Israeli	13	4.1%
Italian	6	1.9%
Maltese	1	0.3%
Mexican	1	0.3%
Montenegrin (previously Russian)	1	0.3%
Moroccan	1	0.3%
Polish	5	1.6%
Portuguese	4	1.3%
Romanian	2	0.6%
Russian	15	4.8%
Russian / Israeli	1	0.3%
Saudi Arabia	1	0.3%
South African	2	0.6%
Spanish	3	1.0%
Sudanese	3	1.0%
Swedish	9	2.9%
Swiss	14	4.4%
Turkey	1	0.3%
Ukraine	1	0.3%
Ukrainian	1	0.3%
USA	1	0.3%
Vietnamese	1	0.3%

945

Madam Speaker: Sorry, would the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition like to view the schedule first, so that we take all the supplementaries on that?

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes.

950 **Madam Speaker:** Have a quick look and see whether the hon. Gentleman would like to proceed to questions.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: So, let me just ask—because this is the schedule that the hon. Member has handed me—is this a schedule of all the 315, or is it the 315 minus the 35 registered
955 Gibraltarians?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, I think it includes all the numbers, but you will have to add it up.

960 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I see. The hon. Member does not know for sure—that is what he has saying. I am slightly surprised by the figure he has given on registered Gibraltarians that are Category 2 individuals. Does he have a sense of the areas within which those individuals work? And are they persons who have recently become registered Gibraltarians?

965 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, I do not have that information. If the hon. Member tables a specific question, I will provide the information to him.

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Yes, of course I will, if he does not have answers. But let me just try one more time—does he have any other information provided by those who drafted the answer for
970 him in respect of those 35 registered Gibraltarians that are Category 2 individuals?

Hon. N Feetham: No ma'am.

Madam Speaker: Next question.
975

Q579/2025

High Executives Possessing Specialist Skills – Breakdown of sectors

Clerk: Question 579, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.
980

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Can the Government provide a breakdown of which sectors HEPSS are operating within at 1 May 2025? That is High Executives Possessing Specialist Skills, for those joining us on radio and television.

985 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, as of 1 May 2025, the number of HEPSS certificates issued, broken down by sector, is as follows:

990

Row Labels	Count of Cert_No
Automobile	2
Bunkering	5
Business Consultancy & Management Services	11
Consultancy, Software & IT Services	8
Financial Services	53
Gaming	110
HMGOG	3
Marketing	11
Music and Entertainment	1
Neurological assessments for litigation purposes	1
Operational Management of Fishing Operations and Sales	2
Property Development	3
Research Services on Private Companies	2
Regulatory	1
Renewable Energy	1
Support Services	1
Telecommunications	2
General Trading	4
Online Trading	1
Derivatives, Shares & Private Equity Trading	1
Financial Assets/Investment Trading	1

995

Total – 224.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

1000

Q580/2025

**High Executives Possessing Specialist Skills –
Breakdown of total numbers and nationality**

Clerk: Question 580, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

1005

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: Can the Government provide a nationality breakdown of the total number of High Executives Possessing Specialist Skills (HEPPS) at 1 May 2025 and are any of these registered Gibraltarians and if so how many?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

1010

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, as of 1 May 2025, there were a total of 224 individuals approved under the High Executives Possessing Specialist Skills (HEPSS) programme. The largest representation by nationality was British, comprising 115 individuals (51.3%). Other nationalities with significant representation include Israelis (11.2%), Irish (5.8%), Indian (4%), French and Swedish (each 2.7%). Of these, 42 individuals—representing

1015

18.8% of the total HEPSS—are registered Gibraltarian holders of red ID cards. I now hand over the information requested.

ANSWER TO QUESTION 580

Nationality	Total Count	Percentage
American	3	1.3%
Australian	5	2.2%
Austrian	4	1.8%
Belarusian	1	0.4%
Belgian	1	0.4%
British	115	51.3%
Canadian	1	0.4%
Cypriot	2	0.9%
Czech	2	0.9%
Danish	1	0.4%
Dutch	3	1.3%
Finnish	1	0.4%
French	6	2.7%
German	4	1.8%
Greek	1	0.4%
Indian	9	4.0%
Irish	13	5.8%
Israeli	25	11.2%
Italian	5	2.2%
Lithuanian	2	0.9%
Polish	4	1.8%
Portuguese	2	0.9%
Romanian	2	0.9%
Russian	1	0.4%
Slovak	2	0.9%
Spanish	2	0.9%
Swedish	6	2.7%
Ukrainian	1	0.4%

1020

Madam Speaker: Would the hon. Member like some time to look at the schedule, or shall we proceed?

1025

Hon. Dr K Azopardi: I will just ask, if I may, the same question on this, in case the Hon. Minister has—and the schedule will travel towards me, and if I have anything else, I will just ask it on the hoof, as it were. Can I just ask the Minister: does he have information about the registered Gibraltarians—there is 42—does he have a sense of which sector they work in? And are they persons who have recently acquired registered Gibraltarian status?

1030 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, I do not have that information but when I inherited this at the Ministry all the information was manually kept but we are now digitising this so in the very near future we will be able to have the information readily available to us whether as now in order to be able to drill down on quite a lot of information the hon. Member is asking we would have to go to individual files. I should have said that before in answer to the previous question.

1035 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Again, I will ask as I did before: does the Hon. Minister have any other information in front of him on the issue of registered Gibraltarians, if not, I will table a next session of the House because it is a different question.

1040 **Hon. N Feetham:** I would welcome the hon. Member tabling a question.

Madam Speaker: Anything on the schedule? Next question.

1045

Q602/2025
HMP Windmill Hill staff –
Anti-bullying policy

Clerk: Question 602, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1050 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Has the anti-bullying policy for HMP Windmill Hill staff been finalised and implemented?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

1055 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Madam Speaker, as I informed this Parliament on 24 June last year, His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar has a central Dignity at Work policy that extends to all public service institutions, including the prison. At that time, I also informed the House that the Prison Service was working in collaboration with the Industrial Relations Department, Unite the Union, and prison staff towards a new working arrangement which would include a bespoke anti-bullying policy, and that it was expected that an advanced working draft would be ready for consideration and implementation by October that year.

1060 I am now informed that circumstances have changed since I gave that answer. It appears that prison staff are no longer pursuing the need for a bespoke policy. I am informed that the staff have switched their union memberships and are in the process of selecting a working committee in order to raise any issues of concern with management. I am informed by HMP's senior management team that they are satisfied that they do not need a bespoke policy at this time, and note that in the past three years there have been no complaints of bullying made by staff.

1065 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Madam Speaker, we have heard that they are no longer pursuing this bespoke policy and that senior management are satisfied. Can we assume that senior management have obviously consulted with more junior colleagues in order to ascertain that?

1070 **Hon. N Feetham:** Yes, Madam Speaker, I believe that is the case.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

1075

Q603/2025

Taxation –

Sympathetic approach to individuals working unsociable hours

Clerk: Question 603, the Hon. C Sacarello.

Hon. C Sacarello: Many companies contracted to work in public areas are compelled to lean on their workers to work during unsociable hours, typically after 7pm or on Sundays. The corresponding effect of Government regulation and enforced overtime is to push the worker into a higher tax band penalising them for effectively Government-forced overtime during unsociable hours. Has the Government given consideration to the notion of a more sympathetic approach to taxation to this small but essential cohort of people who provide a service to Gibraltar?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham): Madam Speaker, the Government recognises the vital contribution made by workers contracted to operate in public areas, particularly those required to work during weekends and unsociable hours such as Sundays. These roles are often critical to ensuring public infrastructure is maintained with minimal disruption to daily life.

We also understand concerns regarding the tax implications of regular overtime, particularly where this may result in individuals moving into higher tax bands. Any income, regardless of how it is earned, is fully taxable as employment income. It is important to clarify that our tax system is progressive, meaning that tax is only paid at the higher rate on the portion of income above the relevant threshold, not on total earnings. It does not affect individuals' underlying basic income; it simply means that the extra income is taxed at the applicable higher rate, as is the case generally when earnings increase.

That said, we are aware of the pressures this can place on essential workers whose overtime is not discretionary but effectively required by the nature of the contracts. It is not possible to cater specifically for this cohort of workers; this would not be fair for the greater body of taxpayers, each with their own specific circumstances. In line with an existing mandate, the Government continues to review the broader framework of work-related taxation to ensure it remains fair and supportive of all taxpayers, including those delivering vital public services.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for the detailed and considered explanation. One point on which we both agree is the importance of treating the taxpayer fairly and equitably. However, these workers are forced to work by Government during unsociable hours. It is not a question of their tax being pushed up by marginal amounts. A lot of these workers are on the ABS—the Allowance-Based System—and they see their taxable income being raised from 17 to 39 percent. That is a huge jump.

Would the Minister give any consideration, given the fact that it is Government regulation enforcing this work on essential workers, to perhaps a tiered system of tax or one that is fairer, to use his own words, and equitable across the sector?

Hon. N Feetham: Madam Speaker, we can have a debate around the fairness of a tax system, but we are not going to do it today—absolutely not, Madam Speaker. But nobody forces anybody; those are the terms and conditions of the employment contract of the relevant individuals. The reality is that if you earn more money, by implication, you pay more tax.

If the hon. Member opposite is asking us to provide for specific tax relief in relation to that cohort of workers, it would certainly be unfair to the general body of taxpayers. So it is certainly not something that the Government has considered, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

1130

Q604/2025
European Commission –
Proposal to de-list Gibraltar from the EU grey-list of finance centres

Clerk: Question 604, the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

1135 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Has the European Commission indicated to the Government when it hopes or expects that the latest Commission proposal to de-list Gibraltar from the EU so-called grey-list of finance centres will be voted on by the European Parliament?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry.

1140 **Minister for Justice, Trade and Industry (Hon. N Feetham):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As the hon. Member knows, the European Commission proposed on 10 June 2025, for a second time, to update the so-called grey list by inter alia removing Gibraltar from it. I say "inter alia" because in this same proposal, the European Commission proposes to remove other jurisdictions from the list as well as include new jurisdictions.

1145 Turning specifically to the hon. Member's question, he is correct to point out that this proposal from the Commission will need to be consented to by the European Parliament before it can enter into force. The process requires that this consent be provided within one month—therefore, by 10 July. The European Parliament can request for this one-month period to be prolonged by a further month, which would take us to 10 August.

1150 However, regardless of the above—notably the ability to extend this period to 10 August—the advice the Government has received is that a vote would, in any event, take place before the European Parliament rises for its summer recess. The vote is therefore likely to take place during the week commencing 7 July in Strasbourg; in what would be the last European Parliament plenary session this side of the summer break.

1155 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I am grateful for that indication. Indeed, there were slightly misleading reports in the press when the European Commission proposal was publicised, in the sense that there was an indication that this somehow meant delisting. But of course, the Minister will agree with me that the Commission proposal does not amount to delisting until the European
1160 Parliament has itself adopted that proposal.

Given what happened last time—when there was an element of politicking, I put it no higher than that—is the Government in discussions or lobbying? Has he reached out to friendly MEPs to see what could be done this time, should a similar attempt be made?

1165 **Hon. N Feetham:** Madam Speaker, it is not what the Government will do this time—we are doing what we did last time. If the hon. Member recalls, I did say in this House that we had travelled to Brussels and that we had lobbied the European Commission and indeed also lobbied MEPs of the European Parliament.

1170 I am very happy to report to this House that I will be travelling to Brussels on Wednesday. I believe there is a national strike in Brussels this Wednesday, which affects the airport. So we will be flying—certainly I will be flying—to the nearest airport in the Netherlands. We will then make our way to Brussels and will be having meetings on Thursday with members of the European Parliament. We will continue our lobbying efforts, Madam Speaker.

1175 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, CIVIL CONTINGENCIES AND SPORT

Q605/2025

**Fires (Past 12 months) –
Confined to space of origin**

Clerk: Questions for the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

1180 **Question 605, the Hon. J Ladislaus.**

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many fires around Gibraltar in the past 12 months have been confined to the space of origin?

1185 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon): Madam Speaker, there have been 127 fires confined to the space of origin.

1190 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Sorry, does the Hon. the Minister have the total number of fires?

1195 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, since January 2024 to date, there have been 322 incidents classified as fire calls. Of these, 189 have been false alarms, 15 malicious, and 174 good intent—mainly as a result of fire alarm activation. There have been 133 actual fires of varying severities, with 127 of these confined to the space of origin.

1200 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** Excuse my microphone. I am grateful to the Clerk. Madam Speaker, if I could ask in respect of the six fires—which I believe is correct—that were not confined to the point of origin: does the Hon. Minister have the reasons why they were not confined? Was it, for example, that compartmentation was not in place? Was there no detection? Does the Hon. Minister have any more information on those?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, unfortunately I do not.

1205 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q606/2025

**Fires (Past 12 months) –
Confined to space of origin**

1210 **Clerk:** Question 606, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Are there any buildings in Gibraltar with combustible cladding? If so, please provide a breakdown as to how many are:

- 1215 (i) Privately owned buildings rented out to private tenants (whether as dwellings or for business purposes);
 (ii) Privately owned buildings rented out to Government; and
 (iii) Government owned buildings.

1220 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon): Madam Speaker, a study was carried out in 2017, following the Grenfell tragedy, in conjunction with Building Control. At the time, one single development—Tradewinds—was identified as having limited amounts of the type of cladding used at Grenfell. This was immediately dealt with, making the affected areas safe, and Tradewinds Management Limited is in the process of conducting works.

1225 Furthermore, we can confirm that all modern buildings must follow strict requirements as per guidance in the relevant documents. The Department of Town Planning and Building Control is responsible for monitoring the quality of the building materials used during construction.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How often does the Department of Building Control oversee, for example, a new project?

1235 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, I believe that question forms part of another question coming up shortly.

Q607/2025

Government owned buildings – Portable fire extinguishers

1240 **Clerk:** Question 607, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: Are all Government owned buildings equipped with portable fire extinguishers? If so, how often are those fire extinguishers serviced? Does the Government have any plans to move away from standard portable fire extinguishers to replace them with P50 portable fire extinguishers?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

1250 **Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, non-residential buildings have varying degrees of extinguishing requirements. Residential buildings are not required to have portable fire extinguishers in common areas, except for areas of specific risk such as car parking areas and electrical rooms.

1255 The type of extinguisher required for any given premises or any given area within the premises varies depending on the risk of fire involved. P50 portable fire extinguishers are relatively new to the market, and the GFRS Fire Safety Team are following due diligence to assess the benefits and/or downsides. The overriding factor is whether any given extinguisher meets the requirements of the latest version of the relevant standards.

1260 **Hon. J Ladislaus:** I am grateful. Do we have a timeline as to when the GFRS may reach a conclusion as to whether the P50 extinguishers would be useful for Gibraltar? Because, as the Hon. the Minister is no doubt aware, they are more eco-friendly than the current models on the market, and my understanding is that they do not require regular maintenance as others do—they only need refilling every 10 years.

1265 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, as per other questions in the past, I take the advice from the GFRS. So, whenever they come up with the findings of their reports, then we will take action accordingly.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

1270

Q608/2025

Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service –

Evacuation of individuals with mobility issues and/or disabilities

Clerk: Question 608, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

1275

Hon. J Ladislaus: How does the Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service approach the evacuation of individuals with mobility issues and/or any disabilities which could impair a person's ability to evacuate a building during a fire or any other emergency?

1280

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon): Madam Speaker, this very much depends on the building. Generally, the management of any given building is responsible for providing a fire safety strategy, which is passed on to the GFRS Safety Team for feedback and advice. However, the GFRS are not responsible for the initial evacuation of individuals from buildings. The management of such buildings is responsible for the implementation of said strategy and the training of their staff.

1285

Occupiers of private dwellings are generally responsible for their own evacuation in the event of an emergency. Nonetheless, if upon attendance at a fire there are persons reported in need of emergency evacuation, the GFRS personnel would prioritise the safest possible evacuation of said persons. The safety of life is always the number one priority. However, proper management of a building should negate the potential of life becoming endangered.

1290

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, could the Hon.—I do not know if the Hon. Minister has this information in front of him—but is the Hon. the Minister aware whether there are any fire safety lifts installed? Sorry—what I mean is, is the Hon. the Minister aware whether there are any fire safety lifts installed in buildings such as, for example, Bishop Canilla House and Hassan Centenary Terraces, which are high-rise buildings?

1295

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, I am not aware, but I can ask.

1300

Madam Speaker: Next Question

Q609/2025

Rooke Site –

Fire risk assessments

1305

Clerk: Question 609, the Hon. J Ladislaus.

Hon. J Ladislaus: How many fire risk assessments have been carried out at the Rooke Site, both in relation to:

1310

- (i) Any construction works being undertaken; and
- (ii) In respect of the elderly care home building?

Please provide details as to any risks identified and whether those have been addressed.

1315

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon): Madam Speaker, fire risk assessments at construction sites do not fall under the GFRS. These are the responsibility of the construction companies' on-site Safety Officer.

1320

In respect to the second part of the question, the fire safety requirements based on the relevant guidance documents were set out for this project, and the fire strategy report was provided by AMA Services Limited. The GFRS Fire Safety Department has already carried out a number of site inspections to ensure the fire safety standards are being met. We can confirm that this building is required to be built to the fire safety standards that were relevant at the time of application. The GFRS Safety Department will only issue the "no objection" to the issuing of a certificate of fitness once they are satisfied that all the requirements have been met.

1325

Hon. J Ladislaus: Madam Speaker, so is it the case then that, at this point in time, the building has not been—or the GFRS have not been—satisfied that the building is up to code, so that the relevant fire safety certificate can be issued?

1330

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, what I understand from the information provided is that it has not reached that point yet. When it does, the GFRS will carry out the inspection and then determine whether or not they are happy that everything has been met.

1335

Hon. J Ladislaus: Is the Hon. Minister aware of what it is that has not reached code yet, or what still needs rectification?

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, I am not sure we are on the same line here. What I am saying is that, from what I understand, they have not reached that point yet. So the GFRS have not undertaken the investigation yet, prior to the certificate of fitness being issued.

1340

Hon. J Ladislaus: Does the Hon. Minister have a timeline as to when the project is expected to reach that stage?

1345

Hon. L M Bruzon: No, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

1350

Q610/2025
Children's play parks –
Refurbishment plans

Clerk: Question 610, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1355

Hon. E J Reyes: Does the Government have any plans to refurbish or provide further shaded areas at our children's play parks?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

1360

Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon): Madam Speaker, the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority is currently reviewing the provision of shaded

areas in some of the children's parks and playgrounds. In some cases, the physical makeup of the area means that major works would be required, so all options are being explored.

1365

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So, from what I gather, I think the Minister is admitting that there are plans. Does he have any concrete details of where these further shaded areas will be provided?

1370

And part of the question was the refurbishment. The Minister may be aware it was recently raised on social media. Parents and grandparents need carers for children. Now that the warmer weather has arrived, the sun is a bit more scorching, and the existing shade provider seems to have disappeared. Perhaps the Minister can provide further details in his answer in order to reassure that those that used to be there are actually being replaced. He may or may not have the timescale for that.

1375

And also, because I have asked it in the past, I want to be insistent: can he identify the areas where the plans are, where possible, to provide the further shaded areas?

1380

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, there are a total of 22 parks. Many of them—or some of them—have shaded areas, like Catalan Bay, Westview Park, which the hon. Gentleman has just mentioned, and Alameda Cathedral Square. Many of them are naturally shaded by trees. Others, within the estates, are naturally shaded by buildings around them. So there are not that many which do not have shaded areas that can be done fairly easily.

1385

With regards to Westview Park, Madam Speaker, the shaded area—the canopies—were removed for repairs. They should have been replaced this week. Hopefully, within the next couple of days, they should be back up.

1390

Hon. E J Reyes: I am grateful, Madam Speaker. It is more so to hear that reassurance that, if not done, it is imminent in the Westview Park area. However, part of my question was: is the Minister aware of any new areas that have been identified and are in the process of having new shaded provisions made available?

1395

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, we are constantly looking at where we can improve facilities. One of them, I believe at the moment, is the Laguna Estate Park. Unfortunately, again, there are parks like that at Europa Point where it is impossible, due to the harsh conditions, to provide canopies.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q611/2025
Europa Sports Complex –
Completion of repairs

1400

Clerk: Question 611, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1405

Hon. E J Reyes: Have all necessary repairs been satisfactorily completed in respect of the roof and water ingress at Europa Sports Complex?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

1410

Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon): Madam Speaker, after extensive investigation to determine the exact nature of the water ingress at the Europa Sports Complex, I am glad to report that works have been commissioned and will start

very soon. I am also glad to confirm that the integrity of the roof is intact and, therefore, the matter seems to be of a secondary nature and had a simpler solution than initially thought.

1415 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is good news to know that we seem to have identified the problem and it is being tackled. Is the Minister aware of the costs that are going to be involved in carrying out these necessary repairs? And is that bill going to be met by Government, or is it under some sort of construction guarantee and, therefore, a third party will make good those defects?

1420 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, we have one quote and we are expecting another one—hopefully this week. So, as the hon. Gentleman will understand, we will have to wait for that second quote to come in before getting details. With regards to the guarantee, the cost will be met by Government.

1425 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q612/2025
Hockey pitch at Bayside Sports Centre –
Refurbishment

1430 **Clerk:** Question 612, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can Government provide an update in respect of its project to refurbish the hockey pitch at Bayside Sports Centre?

1435 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

1440 **Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, in respect of the hockey pitch at the Bayside Sports Complex, the tender process was completed, but a contractor has not yet been selected. Given the amount of works in the area, and after discussions with the Gibraltar Hockey Association, it has been decided to delay the project slightly so that the laying of the new surface and other works are not adversely affected by debris from the other sites.

1445 Madam Speaker, the current facility has suffered in the past from contamination, and it is important to use these lessons to provide the best final product moving forward. The important thing to remember is that the current surface is still safe to play on and is once again being considered for European competition in May 2026.

1450 **Hon. E J Reyes:** I am grateful for that answer, Madam Speaker. Very pleased indeed to hear there seems to be good coordination with the Gibraltar Hockey Association. May I ask—because curiosity gets the better of me—the Minister said in his answer that in the past the facilities have suffered from contamination. Normally, one thinks that contamination is something like food poisoning. What exactly is the type of contamination the Minister referred to?

1455 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, there used to be a long jump track—whatever the exact terminology is—and the sand pit was right next to the hockey pitch. The wind would blow the sand onto the hockey pitch, and now that corner of the hockey pitch is sometimes unplayable because it is very, very slippery. So we want to avoid that happening with a brand new pitch and construction or demolition works right next to it.

1460 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

Q613/2025
Pickleball –
Provision of facilities

1465 **Clerk:** Question 613, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Has there been any further progress in respect of the provision of Pickleball facilities for use by sportspersons in Gibraltar?

1470 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon): Madam Speaker, as it stands, the Gibraltar Pickleball Association has the following allocations available to them: Europa Sports Complex—two hours per week; Bayside Sports Complex—six hours per week. Additionally, the Association will be applying via the Community Use Scheme for the 2025–26 season.

1475 In respect of the Bayside Sports Complex, six new courts have been marked out in the multi-use games area, and the GSLA has also purchased 10 new nets, 28 bats, and 48 balls. This is common practice with new associations, where start-up equipment is made available to newcomers or those wishing to try the sport for the first time.

1480

Hon. E J Reyes: I am grateful for that update, Madam Speaker. I think the Minister is more than aware of the fast-growing popularity of these pickleball facilities. However, he mentioned in his answer the provision of facilities in the multi-use games area. That would, I think, logically be to the detriment of that area being available for other sports. I believe netball has used that in the past, and so on. If that is the case, what other alternative provisions have been made for those who can no longer use the MUGA area because it is now earmarked for pickleball?

1485

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, being a multi-use sports area means it has to be shared by different sports. It does not necessarily mean that we remove allocations from one sport to benefit another. It could be that those allocations were free, or it could be that the sport using the facilities has moved to one of the schools which have gymnasiums available to them, and so on. So I doubt that anyone has been displaced as a consequence of pickleball being given six hours a week.

1490

Hon. E J Reyes: If I may, Madam Speaker, in order to get some sort of update—when we have had questions and answers on this topic before, we have been led to believe that a private developer was very seriously considering providing a pickleball area in the premises always known as the Mount. Although it may not be a Government-led project, is the Minister aware of any progress being made in that respect, of having pickleball facilities also available there?

1495

1500

Madam Speaker: I am not sure if that question infringes the six-month rule or not—I cannot remember. But the hon. Member is saying that there has been a question tabled in the past and he has seeking an update. So I do not know if the Hon. Minister is happy to answer.

1505

Hon. L M Bruzon: Madam Speaker, as the hon. Gentleman points out, it is a private investor. The last meeting I had with them was last week, and they are already in consultation with the construction company to get works underway.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

1510

EMPLOYMENT, EQUALITY, CULTURE AND TOURISM

Q614/2025
Tourism strategy –
Announcement

1515 **Clerk:** Questions to the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.
Question 614, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: When will the Government be in a position to announce the Tourism Strategy for Gibraltar?

1520

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

1525 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, the tourism strategy was finalised over 12 months ago and we have been actively working with it since. However, it has not yet been published, as we have been awaiting the outcome of the deal—the treaty—and the result of this would determine two distinct strategic pathways. It was deemed prudent not to release a document that might present conflicting scenarios. We are therefore now clearer on which direction we will be taking, and we will be publishing it soon. In my budget speech last year, I made clear that this is a working document which will be amended as and when circumstances change.

1530

1535 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the Hon. Minister's confirmation that the publishing of this strategy was subject to the treaty, and he has now taken the view that he will, I believe he said, in due course publish it once it is ready. But can I ask, with respect to the substance of the actual strategy: will there be included some metrics or KPIs—key performance indicators—so that we can then better assess the success of this strategy? For example, are we looking at increases in tourist numbers, increases in longer stays from tourists? Are any of these factors contemplated within the Minister's strategy?

1540 **Hon. C P Santos:** There are areas where KPIs will be taken into account, especially with regards to expanding overnight stays. The rest, as you can see here, is what we have been working on for the past 12 months, and we are very much data-oriented. So of course, we have to analyse the data to see whether the strategy has been a success. If it has, we will continue with the strategies as they are, and if things are not working the way that we expect, as I said, it is a live working document, so we may make some necessary changes whenever necessary.

1545

1550 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the Minister for confirming that these sorts of KPIs and markers will be included within the strategy, and I very much look forward to seeing the strategy published. I believe he said that there is an intention to publish it, but in terms of timing, does he have an expectation if it will be published this year or next year? What time frame are we looking at, if I may pose a question?

1555 **Hon. C P Santos:** As soon as we make the necessary edits—because, as I mentioned, we were waiting on a treaty and we had two different strategic pathways—so as soon as the treaty is finalised, we are obviously working on the changes. Seeing as the agreement has been announced, as soon as that happens, this will be ready to be published.

Madam Speaker: Next Question.

1560

Q615/2025
Gibraltar Music Festival –
Reinstatement

Clerk: Question 615, the Hon G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: Has the Government still got plans to reinstate the Gibraltar Music Festival?

1565

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos): Madam Speaker, as stated in the manifesto, we are currently exploring a range of options to reinstate this in a manner that ensures no additional cost to the taxpayer.

1570

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may—I believe, having referred to the manifesto, that the commitment written therein was that the Government would bring back the music festival to Gibraltar. That is a lot more assertive than the term used by the Hon. Minister now, which was that “we are exploring.” Can I ask, in terms of exploring how to bring back this music festival at no cost to the taxpayer—which was a promise in the manifesto—whether he is already engaged with private sector providers, and how developed are those conversations with regard to actually bringing this project to fruition?

1575

Hon. C P Santos: I apologise, Madam Speaker—I was waiting to be called up, which I already had. The nature of festivals, as they are, has changed. We used a model that was very similar to the bigger festivals, like Glastonbury, where you had a full weekend of events. Economies have changed, and now festivals are working in different ways. So we are trying to see how it can work for Gibraltar—for our market and our people.

1580

If we look at the ones happening closer to us, up the coast, they are not full weekend events—they are separate events that happen throughout a period of time. Last year, we piloted one of these projects with the Melon Diesel concert and the Nile Rodgers concert, to see how that would work in order to also make it a tourism-led event, and not just an event for local people.

1585

We are looking at different ways that we can make this happen. What the structure is going to be has not been decided yet, but for the past year we have been piloting how we can make events self-funded. We just recently did it—not with a music event, but with David Walliams—so that it was at no cost to the taxpayer, and we saw how that would work financially. We are currently exploring and piloting different projects that will then, hopefully, allow us to put together the festival in the best way that it would work for Gibraltar in 2025, 2026, or 2027.

1590

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may, I believe from what the Hon. Minister said, it looks like the Government is piloting different types of projects of different sizes. So am I right in assuming that we may not see the Gibraltar Music Festival return in the nature that we used to enjoy in the past—in terms of its grandeur and size, if I may put it that way?

1595

Hon. C P Santos: The art world is an ever-evolving world, so I need to find ways to make things work as they currently are—not just how they would work in Gibraltar, but in general. As I said, the economy has changed drastically from what it was before, when we used to have the GMF in

1600

that guise. I do not think we need to necessarily abide by doing things exactly the same way every time.

We could find that that is the best way that it works—we have a weekend of events with headliners and locals—or we could decide that it could be a week with one different performer each day, or a few days. It is just about finding ways that work both economically for those investing in it at no cost to the taxpayer, and for the community, and how it can work as a tourism-led event and an entertainment event for Gibraltar.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may, I believe in the answers to the Minister's previous questions, he said that these types of events form part of the Government's events-led strategy, if I may put it that way. I understand that the last time we had a festival of this kind was in 2019, if I am correct. So can I ask the Hon. Minister—if I may put it in these terms—how important bringing back the music festival of this nature is to the events-led strategy of this Government? And is it the case, from the answers that he has given, that depending on the commerciality of private investment, he may not be able to guarantee the music festival as we all used to know it back to Gibraltar, because it may not be commercially viable to do so in the ways that we were used to doing it before? Is that the position?

Hon. C P Santos: Well, firstly, considering that before it used to be funded by Government, and now our commitment is to get it privately funded, obviously the way that it would be presented is going to be completely different—that is one thing.

Then, with regards to event-led tourism, we are trying a lot of different niche markets. It is not about just one event. So the music festival would be one. As I said, we have piloted different types of events. Last summer, we piloted another set of events during the summer period, during the beaches, that we promoted across the border. We are working on the release of the Literary Festival to make it more focused for people from abroad to come.

Are we having the same music festival that we did in 2019? Funding is going to come from different places, so we are not going to have the same event which was funded by the Government before. But that is one of the many events that we are planning and are currently actively producing—and have been doing so for the past 18 months—in order to bring different types of niche markets into Gibraltar.

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q616/2025
Registered as unemployed –
Young people between the ages of 16 and 30

Clerk: Question 616, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: How many young people between the ages of 16 and 30 have been registered as unemployed, broken down by month from January 2024 to date?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos): Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman may not be aware that it is practice to read the unemployment figures on a quarterly average basis. Therefore, with this established practice, I am happy to note that the average number of Gibraltarians registered as unemployed from January 2024 to date is as follows:

- First quarter of 2024 – 20;
- Second quarter of 2024 – 20;
- Third quarter of 2024 – 19;
- Fourth quarter of 2024 – 20; and
- First quarter of 2025 – 22.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may just highlight to the Hon. Minister that I do have the unemployment quarterly average table that was produced by the Government, and I can see that it was last updated on 17 June 2025, which is just a few days after I put in my question—on Friday 13 June. Nevertheless, my question did ask for a breakdown of the unemployment between those ranges, broken down by month, and he has given them to me in the quarterly summative of that figure. Is he able to provide a breakdown by months, as I asked in the original question?

Hon. C P Santos: No, Madam Speaker. We are unable to provide it by month because this has been the norm since the previous administration. Since 2017, it was decided to give figures on a quarterly basis because of how best to average out the numbers in order to be able to give an accurate average for a period of time.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may—referring back to the table which I have—I believe the Hon. Minister repeated the exact numbers which I have on the table. But my question is specifically about those between the ages of 16 and 30. Is he saying that these numbers on the Government website, which are supposed to reflect unemployment across the whole spectrum of ages, are just reflective of those between 16 and 30? Is it possible that any of these, as he has given me the same numbers as the website, could be over this age range? I just want to make sure that I have the same data.

Hon. C P Santos: Madam Speaker, we do not have specific data of ages. Usually the average is for a period of time because it moves. It is not the same 20 people or the same 19 or 20 people.

This is an evolving number of people that come in and then are unemployed for a period of time. Then they become employed. Then they could be unemployed once they give a notice period within another job.

So we do not tend to break it down by ages either. So what we have is an average of a three-month quarterly period.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may, given that the position is taken to produce an average which then does not take into account, in my view, the fact that he has just rightly put it, in some months you have people who are unemployed, become unemployed, and then are unemployed again, how are we supposed to be in a position where we are able to critically assess whether there are any patterns, whether there are any retention issues, whether there are any issues with respect to how we refer these young people to certain jobs through the Government programmes such as, I think, the Connect Hub, Paths programme, the Careers Fair. So how is it that the Government is supposed to act on this data?

We are merely looking at averages, but we do not really have, if I may put it in these terms, the meat to the bones. We cannot really ascertain how many people and when are unemployed and in what ages and how we can better deal with the situation.

Hon. C P Santos: These are the figures we publish and there is a reason that you publish these quarterly. Now, that does not mean that the Department of Employment does not know who is employed or who is not at the time. You provide Find a Job clinics, you get people, we are there to help people in employment, maybe searching for other employment or people who are unemployed, and we have dedicated teams that will obviously help those people find employment.

1705 From my perspective, we did a gap analysis on what the jobs with biggest turnover was and we have obviously worked on apprenticeships, not just on the training centre, but different apprenticeships according to whether the gap was in the market. So we are very aware of what the movement of jobs is and what the turnover is. These are the published data that we publish on the Government website.

1710 I am very happy to meet up with them behind the Speaker's Chair and have a more detailed discussion on it, but this is not something that is easy to put into specifics because someone could be unemployed for one week or three days. Someone could come and register as unemployed and within three days they could be employed within one of the schemes. So this is not the same 20 people coming.

1715 There are people that come in and they are unemployed and they find employment. Someone else goes in and out of employment. So this is why it is very difficult to create an accurate data month per month or by age broken down in that way.

Hon. C Sacarello: Madam Speaker, would the Hon. Minister, who I believe is also the Minister for Youth, find it useful to have that data on his fingertips?

Hon. C P Santos: As I said, unemployment is in most cases a temporary status. Therefore, we will have a number of young people coming back from either leaving school or coming back from having studied and maybe not getting a job. So it is not that it is a regular number of 16 to 30-year-olds that are unemployed for an extended period of time.

1725 Younger people will inevitably be unemployed in the unemployment list at some point due to the nature of the fact that they are younger people and looking for work. And we deal with those cases as and when they appear. We do not see a trend of hundreds or tens or 20 young people who are unemployed and do not find work.

1730 That is why the age 16 to 30 are the ones that are most in the unemployment list through the nature of the fact that they are young people and starting within the employment ladder.

Madam Speaker: Next Question.

1735

Q617/2025

**Registered under sheltered employment –
Young people between the ages of 16 and 30**

Clerk: Question 617, the Hon. G Origo.

1740 **Hon G Origo:** Madam Speaker, how many young people between the ages of 16 and 30 have been registered under sheltered employment broken down by age and month from January 2024 to date?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

1745

Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos): Madam Speaker, I would respectfully encourage the hon. Member to ensure that the terminology he uses is accurate. The term sheltered employment is no longer applicable as we have moved to a model of supported employment, a shift that has been in place since we took office in October 2023, which better reflects our inclusive and person-centred approach. This terminology has been consistently used in responses since November 2023, including in December 2023, March 2024, July 2024, October 2024, May 2025 and again now in June 2025.

1750

Given this, I trust the hon. Member will now adopt the correct term to ensure clarity and avoid any unintended implications associated with outdated terms. But in this event, I am unsure of what data he would actually like as the supported employment programme consists of many different angles of which I have spoken about already in previous sessions.

Hon G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may first deal with the political point I believe made by the Hon. Minister, I had used the term sheltered employment because in my research I had come across this word before, so one of my supplementaries was going to be whether there was a distinction between sheltered and supported employment. So I am grateful for the Hon. Minister in having pre-empted and clarified that that is the case. The two terms actually are used interchangeably or rather one has replaced the former.

But can I ask, given that he has just stated that he is unable to define what this means, if there is a specific criteria out there that we use to define people who are eligible to supported employment, does he have that available?

Hon. C P Santos: Supported employment programme encompasses all different types of support for different types of demographics. So the target groups that we have are people with intellectual, physical and or mental health disabilities, youth with special needs transitioning from school to work, individuals with long-term unemployment, people with autism, ex-offenders or others facing systemic barriers into employment, there is a criteria according to which of the different avenues we are handling at the time.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may, I refer just briefly to a press release in October 2019, which is where I may have acquired the older term for the purpose of my question. In that press release the Government said that they would work together with the union and explore extending the scheme to other disadvantaged groups. He mentioned one of them, I think he said former criminals in the answers he has just given.

But he also said it would include young people recovering from drug and alcohol misuse and young people leaving care. Can I ask the Hon. Minister whether these groups of people have also been included within the term or criteria which is being applied to those eligible for sheltered employment?

Hon. C P Santos: Supported employment, may I correct you again? The supported employment programme is, as its name implies, getting support for people who need that in employment. Part of this is the PATH programme, as you know, or the NEED programme.

Everything to do with careers and employment at the moment is all very much linked and the supported employment programme involves as well as ex-offenders, we also have a programme in Bruce's Farm. We also have the upskilling programme in Bruce's Farm. We work very closely with agencies like the Care Agency as well and we support anyone that needs that extra bit, be it either registered under the supported employment programme or the EDEC training scheme or any of the different programmes offered by the Department and Ministry of Employment.

Hon. G Origo: Greatful Madam Speaker. It is honest, I take it from the tail end that the criteria, if we may put it that way, is then flexible with respect to the individual cases that we may have applying for supported employment provided that they need it. But with respect to the overall programme itself, can I ask the Hon. Minister whether we have any processes in tracking how these people progress?

Is it the case that we look at whether persons who are eligible for this scheme then are able to move into open employment or if they move to further education, is there a way to see whether these programmes are working so we can then better help these individuals to become more independent and join the rest of the mainstream society, if I may put it that way?

1805 **Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, of course. The aim is to get people into permanent employment. So we do have a tracking system, we have the supported employment office, we basically have our job coaches go and visit and we also have BPAs with different employers so we support, there is a criteria, they go through an assessment process and then we see what type of support different people need.

1810 We speak to different employers, we have had already some people, we support employers and employees, so we have the job coaches support the employees when they are in employment, we also support the employers who may need to learn about the reasonable adjustments that they may make, we also have employers come and ask for advice because some go direct to source and have employees who need extra support. We have a lot of successful candidates move from
1815 the supported employment programme, which can also get people through the training scheme and into permanent employment.

But if you are in the supported employment programme, you will always get support from us, even though the funding for your salary, or you can be an employee of a private company and they pay your salaries, they pay your wages, and we will always be there to support both employer
1820 and employee anyway with any advice they may need, any help on reasonable adjustments or if the employee may want to, as well, like anyone else, change jobs. So that is the aim, to get people into full-time employment.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may, I believe the Hon. Minister did confirm there is a tracking mechanism or process in place, and there is an ultimate goal, which is to get people in
1825 supported employment to then full-time employment, so given that we have a tracking system and this programme is already in place, is he happy with the way the programme is developing, is he satisfied with the numbers who subscribe to this programme, and then the numbers that interchangeably get full-time employment? Is he happy with how it is performing?

1830 **Hon. C P Santos:** There are different types of employees and different types of abilities. Some people will remain within the programme, may be funded by the supported employment company for a longer period of time, some people will go directly to employment. We see it at different numbers.

1835 How do you measure success? For me, success is helping one person. I always say this, and this gets quoted back to me a lot, but the numbers are more than just one person, so I am always very happy every time we get someone progressing.

Whatever way that may be, whether it is in full-time employment, whether it is that we support, there are also different mechanisms where we support a certain amount of hours, a
1840 percentage of hours, and then the employer does another amount. There are all different types of programmes according to the employee, because the point of this programme is that it is person-centred and this is where different people get support. Some people do not get financial support because it is about supporting them into employment for different reasons, which may be more about emotional support or history of being an ex-offender.

1845 What they need is a different type of pathway into employment. It is about a person-centred approach. How can we help this individual?

What is the help they need? We are there to provide it.

Madam Speaker: Next Question.
1850

Q618/2025

Registered within the Training Centre –
Young people between the ages of 16 and 30

Clerk: Question 618, the Hon. G Origo.

Hon. G Origo: How many young people between the ages of 16 and 30 have been registered within the training centre, broken down by age and month, from January 2024 to date?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos): Madam Speaker, the information is as follows:

Month	Age														
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
May-24	3	8	2	11	4	1	3		1	1	2	2			
Sep-24		3	1	3	2	2	1		1						
Apr-25						1									

Direct entry level 2

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, can I ask the Hon. Minister, with respect to the numbers that he has given, whether there is a total maximum capacity in this training centre? And is it the case that, with respect to these intakes, that maximum capacity has been reached, and therefore that is why the numbers, in terms of their numeracy, correlate with how many people we have taken in these respective intakes?

Hon. C P Santos: Depends what the course is. The Level 1, where they go round the different disciplines, has a larger number. We can take, I think, between 45 and 60, if I am not mistaken. Then, when you move into electrical or mechanical, for example, they have a maximum number of seven or eight—depending on whether one of them is seven and the other one is eight. Each discipline takes no more than ten.

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may just ask the Hon. Minister—I am grateful that we do have capacity, that there are intakes, and that many people are taking these courses. I am also concerned that we are doing enough to make sure that these individuals who take up these courses then obtain meaningful employment once they are completed.

So, can I ask—and I put it in these terms—is there any kind of consultation with the private sector as regards what the market and skills gaps are, so that we correlate and put forward courses which are then in line with the job opportunities that are available?

Hon. C P Santos: Yes, Madam Speaker, we are very much in touch with the construction industry at this point and what the needs are. The courses changed a few years ago, and we realised that, from craftsmanship, we are going more into maintenance courses. A lot of this industry has needs and wants more local people.

Therefore, a big part of the course is experience in the workplace. So, they all go into work placements. This doesn't secure a job for anyone—the same way that a degree doesn't secure a job for anyone—but getting them in the workplace, in one of the areas where we know there is a

gap for locals, usually ensures that they have employment afterwards. This is not guaranteed, like any form of training, but the success rate of employment is quite high.

1895

Hon. G Origo: Madam Speaker, if I may just pick up on what he said at the tail end of his answer—similarly to what I wanted to ask—I think he said that the success rate is quite high. So, I assume that, therefore, they are tracking the numbers of individuals who take up these courses and then end up achieving full-time employment, or may even go on to take further studies in university, or in other colleges or courses themselves, be it at a different level.

1900

Is the Minister, therefore, satisfied—again, similar to what I asked earlier—with the percentages of how many people take these courses and then end up in full-time employment? I know he said already that there is no guarantee, but I want to see how successful, across the board, these training centres are.

1905

Hon. C P Santos: I do not have the figures at hand, but I know that, with most of the apprenticeships that we are doing, we are being requested for this—not just within the training centre. And I know this is specific to the training centre, but just so that you are aware, we have other apprenticeships where we are working directly with the industries because they need a certain number of positions.

1910

We did one with driver guides, and we went directly for a number of positions that were available. We did it with Skills for Care, and we do it with this. We know where the gaps are—and it is in painting, bricklaying, and plastering—and we know there is a big gap in electrical engineering and mechanical engineering.

1915

So, I am satisfied with the employment rate. A lot of people—everyone who passes—tends to find that journey into employment that much easier. I do not have the numbers specifically, but I am happy to look at these and then be more specific with that percentage.

1920

Hon. G Origo: And then, if I may, Madam Speaker—because I believe he said that he speaks with both the students who take up these courses and also the employers who take on these students—is there a mechanism where we obtain feedback from both the individuals who do the course and also from the prospective employers, who then feed back into saying how well they think they performed, or what could be done to improve the course, so these persons then become better trained, better qualified, and then hopefully end up in these secure jobs—which is, I think, the ultimate aim of this programme? Is that kind of process in place?

1925

Hon. C P Santos: Yes, there is someone that works directly with providers, and they get feedback both from students and from industry. With students, they have feedback sessions with centre managers and training directors as well, to see how they are progressing.

1930

But the course is an NVQ course—the same as it is in the United Kingdom. It is an approved course; it is the industry standard. So, the course is what it is. But the feedback we usually get is from people and how they are developing.

1935

A big part of what they do to get the qualification is a project, where they need to write about what the process is. This gets approved, and they get observed by an assessor. So, the process is very seamless and quite cyclical as well.

But yes, we do have someone who is actually in the centre just to be that go-between—industry and students.

1940

Madam Speaker: Next question.

Q619/2025
Training Centre –
Relocation

Clerk: Question 619, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1945

Hon. E J Reyes: Does Government have any plans for the relocation of the training centre?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

1950

Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos): Madam Speaker, His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is not looking to relocate the Gibraltar Training Centre from its current premises at Unit G24, Europa Business Centre.

1955

Hon. E J Reyes: Madam Speaker, thank you. The Minister, in his answer, has homed in on actually giving us a precise location. I know I am not entirely updated. I know we had a separate training centre, more on the engineering and trade, in what I think technically can be classified as land or a building pertaining to Gibdock. Is that still in use in a programme which is accredited via the licence held by the Government of Gibraltar, or is that place closed down or in the process of everyone being transferred to the Europa Business Centre?

1960

Hon. C P Santos: At the moment, that centre is still being used. And we are looking, actually, to have everyone from that training centre—ideally, I would like to have everyone—within the same training centre. So, that is why our training centre is not going to be relocated, but we will hopefully be able to house all our courses in the same venue: Europa Business Centre.

1965

Madam Speaker: I think that is the end of the questions.

Adjournment

1970

Clerk: The Hon. Deputy Chief Minister.

1975

Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to move that this House do now adjourn until tomorrow, Tuesday at 3 p.m.

Madam Speaker: I now propose the question, which is that this House do now adjourn to tomorrow at 3 p.m. I now put the question, which is that this House should now adjourn to tomorrow at 3 p.m. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Passed.

This House will now adjourn to tomorrow, Tuesday at 3 p.m.

1980

The House adjourned at 5.33 p.m.