



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

**MORNING SESSION: 10.35 a.m. – 1.01 p.m.**

**Gibraltar, Tuesday, 24th February 2026**

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# The Gibraltar Parliament

*The Parliament met at 10.35 a.m.*

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

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

## PRAYER

*Madam Speaker*

## Order of the Day

### CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**Clerk:** Meeting of Parliament, Tuesday 24th February 2026.

Order of Proceedings: (i) Oath of Allegiance; (ii) Confirmation of Minutes - the Minutes of the 18th Meeting of the 15th Parliament which was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

**Madam Speaker:** May I sign the minutes as correct? (**Members:** Aye.)

*Madam Speaker signed the Minutes.*

**Clerk:** (iii) Communications from the Chair; (iv) Petitions; (v) Announcements; (vi) Papers to be laid – the Hon. Chief Minister.

10

### PAPERS TO BE LAID

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to lay on the table the Income Tax (Allowances, Deductions and Exemptions) (Amendment No. 3) Rules 2026.

**Madam Speaker:** Order to lie.

15

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, with your leave, can I just indicate to the House in terms of timetabling, so that everyone is aware, that the Government intends to table in this House the text of the Treaty, the agreement, between the United Kingdom and the European Union in relation to Gibraltar during the course of this week. That publication, of course, will enable all individuals in our community who wish to see the text to see it, because it will also be published

20 on the Government website. I have indicated to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, when I expect that to be.

There is now agreement between the United Kingdom, the European Union and Gibraltar on when that should happen, but of course I want to ensure that I do not set out a date and a time when it is going to happen, when that could still change, for reasons extraneous to Gibraltar, but I do anticipate that that will be during the course of this week.

When I lay that document, that seminal important document, I intend to make a statement in this House about the Government's position in relation to it, which will of course enable hon. Members to ask questions and seek clarification insofar as they wish to do so in the course of that moment, but that is really a moment where I think the Government is telling the Parliament its view about the text that is laid, but not in the way that we would deal with in the context of the next step which we anticipate taking during the course of this session, which is that we would debate a motion, notice of which I would give during the course of this week, which asks the United Kingdom Government to ratify or to begin the process of ratification of that Treaty, and the Government anticipates that we will be in a position to lay that motion this week and for me to be able to set out the terms of that motion during the course of my statement to this House and to debate it during the course of next week to in that way kick off what we might call the British side's process of ratification, and I hope, Madam Speaker, that is helpful in terms of indicating the timetable the Government expects it for.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you.

40

## Questions for Oral Answer

### INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, CIVIL CONTINGENCIES AND SPORT

**Q1/2026**

**GSLA –**

**Swimming pool facility**

**Q2-3/2026**

**Lathbury Sports Centre –**

**Repair works; Ladies' and Men's toilets and showers**

**Q4/2026**

**Lathbury Sports Complex –**

**Gymnasium**

**Clerk:** (vii) Reports of Committees; (viii) Answers to Oral Questions. Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport.

45 Question 1/2026, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government explain why there has recently been no family's changing room facilities available at the GSLA's swimming pool facility at the Westside area, providing details of dates when these said facilities were out of use?

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

50 **Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 2, 3 and 4.

**Clerk:** Question 2, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** When are the repair works at Lathbury Sports Centre in respect of the walls by the stairs going from the garage to the pitch floor leading up to the reception desk area expected to be completed, and what are the estimated costs of these works?  
55

**Clerk:** Question 3, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Since when have the Ladies' and Men's toilets and showers near the reception area at Lathbury Sports Centre been out of order, and when are these works expected to be completed and what are the estimated costs of these repair works?

60 **Clerk:** Question 4, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** During which dates has the Gymnasium at Europa Sports Complex been recently out of use and what are the estimated costs of the repairs necessary to complete these works?

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

65 **Minister for Industrial Relations, Civil Contingencies and Sport (Hon. L M Bruzon):** Madam Speaker, with reference to Question 1, the family changing room at the GSLA's accessible pool was closed on 17 December 2025, together with the two larger changing rooms that had suffered damage caused by a build-up of condensation due to malfunction in the mechanical ventilation system. This led to damage to the ceiling's plasterboard, which required replacement. Priority was given to repairing the two larger changing rooms due to the high footfall.  
70

These were promptly opened and back to full use. The contractors currently engaged in addressing the repairs to the family room, which should be open soon. It is important to note that during the initial closure, alternative facilities were made available to mitigate any disruption.

75 Madam Speaker, moving on to Question 2, the walls of the Lathbury Sports Complex were damaged due to water ingress. The walls and stairwell need to remain exposed for a bit longer so that no humidity remains once the plasterboard is replaced and thus mitigate the risk of any repairs being ineffective. The cost of these works is still to be determined, but all indications are that there could be latent defects with no costs payable.

80 Madam Speaker, referring to Question 3, the ladies' toilets at the Lathbury Sports Complex have not been subject to closure. However, the ladies' changing rooms were closed on Friday 13 February as a result of water ingress. Although they are expected to be reopened this week, it is important to note that there are two ladies' changing rooms with shower facilities, and the second one has remained operational throughout.

85 In respect of the male toilets, only some urinals have remained out of use, with all other sanitary facilities and showers fully operational. A contractor is on site addressing this issue, and these should be back online soon.

Finally, Madam Speaker, with regards to Question 4, the top floor of the Europa Gymnasium was closed on 21 January. Staff transferred equipment to the lower floor that remained open for a further seven days, with the gym finally closing in its entirety on 28 January due to water ingress.  
90 As with the works at the Lathbury Sports Complex, costs, if any, are yet to be determined.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. In respect of Question 1, the Minister said that, for the dates, the family's changing room was closed on 17 December. Does he have an indication when these are to be reopened?

95 Also, can I bring to his attention, and ask if he was aware, that although the Minister said that  
alternative facilities were made available, I am told there is no actual notice telling parents where  
it is that they can use these family changing rooms. I must add, it is crucial for the family changing  
room to be made available, because there are clear notices that any child over the age of four, if  
I can give you an example, if a mother takes her young son, who is over the age of four, she is not  
100 allowed to take her son into the female adult changing room, and therefore it has left these  
parents sort of there in the middle of the corridor. Being wintertime, the child is wet, having come  
out of the pool.

It is not just a question of a quick shower to rinse off any chlorine or any chemical used for the  
treatment of the water, but rather the child being cold in winter months and completely wet and  
unable to change. So, if I can start with that, when does he expect that to be ready? I know the  
105 Minister has given the reasons why it was closed.

For a very long time, well over a year, the parents have been noticing there was a lot of mould  
and a lot of problems coming through there. Obviously, it must have reached a stage when it was,  
for health and safety reasons, better to stop it happening. But I would be grateful for further  
details from the Minister.

110 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, I am told that they should be open soon. In other words,  
when the larger changing rooms were closed, they were repaired within 48 hours, I believe. So  
that was a quick repair.

Unfortunately, the family changing room is taking a bit longer. The alternative facilities are  
within the same building, just adjacent to the larger 25-metre pool. So, if anyone needs alternative  
115 changing room facilities or shower facilities, they are at Echo.

**Hon. Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** It is actually very effective, I must say.

**Madam Speaker:** The hon. Member is looking at me, but I am probably the person who is least  
best placed to give technological advice on the microphones.

120 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** I appreciate how uncomfortable it is for parents with young children,  
because both my children have been through that swimming pool and the new one at Lathbury.  
So, I understand that it is inconvenient, but we are trying our best in getting it sorted as quickly as  
we can.

125 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker, I note, unfortunately, the Minister has been unable to give us  
a date, other than saying he hopes the changing room facilities will be available soon. Can I get a  
commitment from the Minister that at least some clear signs will be put up there explaining to  
parents where the alternative facilities are? Because the Minister seems to be aware of these, but  
the parent who goes there and is unfamiliar with the set-up of even a 25-metre pool or whatever  
is left in the corridor with a wet and cold child.

130 So can I ask him, please, to have an assurance that during the course of the working day, at  
least, some notes will be put up with a diagram, so that parents are aware. Can we do that with  
respect to Question 1?

**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madame Speaker, the CEO of the GSLA normally listens in to Parliament, but  
just in case he misses this one, I will make sure that I ask him to put up a sign.

135 **Hon. E J Reyes:** I am grateful, Madame Speaker. I know the Minister can be cooperative when  
he wants to. I hope the CEO of GSLA gets on to that.

In respect of Question 2, the wall by the stairs going up from the garage, which has been in a  
bad state for a rather long time, but the Minister has tried to explain. I think he was saying it is a  
question of waiting for the thing to dry up and so on. It is just a very unsightly picture.

140 But he joined that together with Question 3. The ladies' toilets and showers, because it does  
say outside toilets and showers, had a notice saying, 'out of order'. So, the Minister has tried to  
explain that some facilities were perhaps available or not.

That was not clear. Whoever gets there to the door just says 'out of order'. So, you do not go  
in to actually inspect whether it is just one shower or all the showers or whatever.

145 So again, it is a question of signage that needs to be updated. And the Minister has kindly said  
that there are other alternative facilities. Again, that is not immediately information available to  
people visiting here.

If there is someone that particular moment in the reception desk, I am sure those attendants  
would be able to guide them. But sometimes they are busy moving equipment. It is a rather well-  
used facility.

150 So again, a question of signage needs to be there because for the Minister's own admission,  
some are in use, and some are out of use. And I do wish him well in respect of the estimated cost  
of repairs. It is a relatively new building.

**Madam Speaker:** Get to the question, please.

155 **Hon. E J Reyes:** The question is, will the Minister commit himself to indicating where the  
alternative facilities are available because not everyone is 100% familiar with that. And that is in  
respect of Questions 2 and 3 that he had joined up together.

160 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, can I just deal with the part of the question that relates  
to the wall? As a frequent visitor to Lathbury, the magnificent Lathbury facility that I was  
persuaded to build by Stephen Linares at the time of the Island Games, I am very protective of it.  
And I have observed on a number of occasions that the walls were coming out in a lot of humidity,  
which was extraordinarily unsightly, which is not what we should have in a facility built as recently  
as 2019 to the standard and at the cost which the taxpayer was put to.

165 So that wall, Madam Speaker, has been hacked away on the basis of my complaint that it  
needed to be resolved, and it needed to be resolved finally and properly because it had previously  
been half-hacked away and the problem had not gone away. The problem kept coming back and  
going further. So, for that reason, Madam Speaker, I have insisted that the contractor should  
provide what we sought, which was an impermeable facility, and therefore they should get to the  
bottom of where the water ingress is and they should deal with it.

170 Of course, now that when I go up there frequently as a parent, I see the unsightly state of the  
wall, but I understand that it is an unsightly state in the process of being entirely repaired and  
being made impermeable, as it should be and should have been from the beginning, although  
given the rains that we have had in the last couple of weeks, which have seemed utterly biblical,  
Madam Speaker, I hope they will have served at least to show the contractor where the channel  
of water is, which was creating the humidity.

175 As to the other point that the hon. Gentleman was making about signage for toilets, I will allow  
the Hon. Minister to address that.

180 **Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, just to be clear, there are two changing rooms on the  
ground floor, which is the floor where the 50-metre pool is. So, the gents have the showers and  
one accessible toilet, and the ladies have the same. The actual toilet facilities are separate to the  
changing room facilities, so there is a separate toilet for women and for men.

So basically, anyone that uses the swimming pool will know that they have the changing room  
facilities. Above those, on the floor above, there is exactly the same changing room facilities with  
shower room facilities. It is accessible to everyone.

Also, there is a lift that they can use to access them as well if they need to.

185 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Very quickly, I just want to note I thank the Chief Minister for taking a note and I concur with him completely. It is better to get the job well done, fixed, once and for all.

But despite the Minister reassuring all of us that there is another facility on the floor above, it does not deter from my original question. Can he please take on the commitment to ensure that  
190 signage is made available to let people know that there are facilities upstairs? And finally, Madam Speaker, on Question number 4, in respect to the gymnasium at Europa Sports Complex, the Minister told us on the 21st of January the upper floor is the one that had the damage done and on the 28th of January the entire facility.

I have not made a note, and perhaps the Minister had not quite answered me fully. When are  
195 these works expected to be completed and everything back to normal?

**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Sorry, Madam Speaker, yes. Again, I am happy to look into the signage. But apart from the general staff at Lathbury, we also have a minimum of three lifeguards on duty at any point who will be more than happy, I am sure, to help anyone find the changing rooms. But again, happy to look into the signage.

200 Madam Speaker, with regards to the gym at Europa, we do not, unfortunately, have a date. GJBS are working almost around the clock, I am not going to say around the clock, but almost, to try and get everything back up and running.

I must say that Members of the gym have been offered either the option of freezing the membership or using the gym at King's Bastion Leisure Centre in the meantime. So that facility is  
205 available for those who need to use the gym. But we are trying to get it open as quickly as possible, but I do not have a date.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I note and I am grateful for the information that alternatives are being offered by members. I did ask in my Question 4 about the estimated cost.

In the minutes I may say that it is pending, but referring to questions we have had in the last  
210 few years, are these costs that GSLA are going to have to bear or is it still under part of a guarantee, shall we call it that, from the original constructors? Because, again, as the Chief Minister referred to before, these are relatively new facilities built in connection with the Island Games, and it is a pity to see that five years on we are facing these problems. Unfortunately, not for the first time, but it does happen in construction works and I want to know whether the taxpayer is going to...

215 2019, was not it? 2019 was the Island Games. The Chief Minister is amending my diary.

Yes, 2019 was the Island Games, so 2018 construction. But I am looking towards the cost and whether the taxpayer is going to have to foot any bill there.

**Hon. L M Bruzon:** Madam Speaker, as with the wall at Lathbury, we believe that these are latent defects, in which case they are covered by the contractor at no cost to the taxpayer.

220 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, but Madam Speaker, with respect, this Question 4 was referring to the gymnasium at the Europa Sports Complex, not Lathbury.

**Hon. L M Bruzon:** The same again, Madam Speaker. We believe it is a latent defect. The contractor believes it is a latent defect, so if that is the case, there will be no cost to the taxpayer.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

225

**HOUSING AND THE GIBRALTAR UNIVERSITY**

**Q5/2026**

**Bridge House –**

**Will it accommodate homeless men**

230 **Clerk:** Questions to the Hon. the Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.  
Question 5, the Hon. A. Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Can the Government clarify whether Bridge House is intended exclusively for men undergoing separation or divorce, or whether it will also accommodate homeless men, men at risk of homelessness, or other categories?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

235 **Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, Bridge House will cater solely for men who are in the process of separation or divorce and require financial help, as most are paying alimony, rent, maintenance, etc., while they find their feet during this transitional period in their lives.

**Madam Speaker:** Any supplementary?

240 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, would the Hon. Minister be able to clarify whether referrals to Bridge House will be made by the Housing Department, or will the charity themselves be determining who they accept or refer to Bridge House?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Sorry, Madam Speaker, did the hon. Lady mean who is going to what? Costing? Are you thinking of costing?

245 Sorry, I did not hear the question.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, I meant in terms of allocation to Bridge House.

**Hon. P A Orfila:** The allocation of people, yes? Okay. That is something that we have not really sat down to do yet.

250 This is going to be, presumably, be done by a group of people who will take on board the requests of people who are wanting to use Bridge House, and we shall see whether it is something that we can help them with. Staying at Bridge House is something that they can take advantage of.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, would the Hon. Minister clarify who she envisages this group of people to be? The committee of the charity, a specific board?

255 **Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, I would like to have a cross-section of people on the board, but we still have not come to that conclusion. We still have not got them.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, when the hon. Lady says we, who specifically is we? Who is deciding on the decisions that are being made by Bridge House? Is this the charity board, the Housing Department?

260 Who is running the decisions being made in relation to Bridge House?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, it is going to be a combination of people. When I refer to, we, I refer to the people I work with, the people who surround me. I refer to people and their suggestions, not just mine.

265 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, but the Hon. Minister is not really addressing the question, when I am asking who is making the decisions in relation to Bridge House. I am specifically asking who is leading on the project in relation to Bridge House. Is it the Housing Department? Is it a specific board? Is it a specific committee? Is it the charity board? What constitutes Bridge House and who is leading on the development of this actual halfway House, Bridge House? Can she elaborate a bit further on the project and what constitutes Bridge House?

270 **Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Minister is answering the question I was asked. These are supplementary questions which I think need other direction. I have answered what was asked of me.

275 She would like to know who is going to be on the Board, who is going to give it to me next time, and I will be prepared to answer all those questions. At the moment, we are concentrating on the building of Bridge House and its division of rooms, rather than who is going to sit around the table and who is going to come in. Let us have the building first, and then we shall take them on board.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q6/2026**  
**Bridge House –**  
**Operational commencement**

280 **Clerk:** Question 6, the Hon. A. Sanchez.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Can the Government confirm the anticipated operational commencement date for Bridge House?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

285 **Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, not at the moment. We are currently in the pre-construction phase.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, in January 2025, it was suggested that Bridge House would open later in that year. Would the Hon. Minister confirm or clarify why that timeline seems to have slipped?

290 **Hon. P A Orfila:** No, I think we are still where we are. Remember that this is an old building that needs to be transformed, and sometimes when this happens, you do come across hiccups that you did not expect at the very beginning. But we are overcoming them, and they should be starting very soon.

295 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Also, in terms of progress, would the hon. Lady perhaps be able to give us a bit more insight of where the project is at exactly? Has it, for example, received all the necessary approvals, including certification for habitation, any required fire and safety certificates? Would she be able to perhaps give us more clarity of where exactly it is at?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, everything has been approved. It is gone to the DPC. We have had the fire services there too, so we have got everything is being done. And yes, we have got everything covered and done. It is just a question of getting it started.

300 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Also, Madam Speaker, has the management structure, for example, and all the volunteers and everything in place?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Yes, Madam Speaker, everything is in place.

305 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Madam Speaker, it is my understanding from a recent GBC interview that the Minister gave that a GoFundMe page has been opened in respect of Bridge House. Would the Hon. Minister be able to clarify whether this GoFundMe page has been initiated by the Government, or has it been initiated by a charity or a private individual?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, this is a charity, wholly run by a charity, not Government.

310 **Hon. A Sanchez:** Also, Madam Speaker, in respect of Government direct public funding, would she be able to give some clarity in respect of how much direct public funding has been allocated in respect of Bridge House?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, the funding has been the donation of the building.

**Hon. A Sanchez:** Other than the donation of the building, will Bridge House be receiving any other direct public funding, perhaps by way of a yearly grant or payment of wages of staff or anything like that?

315 **Hon. P A Orfila:** Well, this question at the moment is irrelevant, but I am not foreseeing that that is going to happen.

**Madam Speaker:** All right, next question.

**Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, can I just ask one question?

**Madam Speaker:** That is one last one, we have had six on this already.

320 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Madam Speaker, can I just ask the hon. Lady, does she know how many men the House would be able to accommodate once it is finished? Does she have a sense? Presumably there are plans that they are working towards.  
Does she have a sense of that?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, we envisage 20 to 22 rooms.

325 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

**Q7-10/2026**

330 **Housing Allocation Scheme Rules 2026 –  
“Safeguarding the identity of Gibraltar”; Registered Gibraltarians; Registered Gibraltarians;  
Further requirements; Disqualification**

**Q11/2026**

**Action for Housing –  
Criteria for medical and social cases**

**Q12/2026**

**Housing waiting list –  
Social and medical categorisation**

**Clerk:** Question 7, the Hon. D J Bossino.

335 **Hon. D J Bossino:** How does the Minister for Housing expect to achieve her stated aim of “safeguarding the identity of Gibraltar” through the implementation of the Housing Allocation Scheme Rules 2026?

**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

**Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this Question together with Questions 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

**Clerk:** Question 8, the Hon. D J Bossino.

340 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Why is there criteria which is separately applied to those registered Gibraltarians who were not born in Gibraltar under the Housing Allocation Scheme Rules 2026?

**Clerk:** Question 9, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Why is there a further requirement termed in the Housing Allocation Scheme Rules 2026 as “the head of the family” in Rule 4.2.1 (a) (ii) of the Rules?

345 **Clerk:** Question 10, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Why is the ownership of property which results in disqualification to entry into the housing list in Rule 4.2.2 (a) of the Housing Allocation Scheme Rules 2026 limited to property situated in Gibraltar?

**Clerk:** Question 11, the Hon. D J Bossino.

350 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Is consideration being given to issuing clear criteria for medical and social cases as called for by Action for Housing?

**Clerk:** Question 12, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** What criteria applies for an individual to be considered for “social” and “medical categorisation”?

355 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

**Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker. In answer to Question 7, we will be safeguarding the identity of Gibraltar by increasing the mandatory residence period for Government housing eligibility from 10 to 15 years. This change will guarantee that the priority for the housing stock remains for long-term residents and for those with established ties to Gibraltar.

360 In answer to Question 8, there is no different criteria. A 15-year requirement now applies to everyone as proof of residence in Gibraltar and 12 consecutive months before they are able to go onto the housing waiting list. It also has a safeguarding aspect that a Gibraltarian that has spent long periods away from Gibraltar cannot simply seek Government housing on day one of their return.

365 In answer to Question 9, this change enables a young person to be able to take over as head of a household because of unfortunate circumstance. Recommended, obviously, in very exceptional circumstances. This is thrust upon them because their parents may have passed away or are lacking in mental capacity to make judgement.

370 In answer to Question 10, property ownership in Gibraltar is readily identifiable through records and provides a clear and verifiable indicator of whether an applicant has access to accommodation within the jurisdiction. By contrast, extending the rule to property held abroad

would raise practical and evidential difficulties given the wide range of legal systems and verification mechanisms involved. Even if we could identify property owners outside our jurisdiction under the present scheme, it is limited only to property within Gibraltar.

To answer Questions 11 and 12, the categorisation for social or medical cases is decided by the Housing Allocation Committee who was composed of professionals with expertise within the medical and social backgrounds. Each case is classified by its own merits and urgency based on natural and ordinary meaning of the words social and medical. And then the allocation is, again, dependent on suitable housing stock, availability and occupational therapy recommendations.

Madam Speaker, I am neither a social worker nor a doctor nor a mental welfare officer and I cannot therefore challenge the decisions of the experts who form that committee.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Well, but you see, if I may start with, there is quite a bit of information there to unpack because the Hon. Minister has bunched quite a few questions together and they are all really actually very technical in nature.

**Madam Speaker:** What question is the hon. Member identifying? Because there has been answers to each individual question.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Which is fair enough because the hon. Lady has answered it in a structured way. Sometimes we would get Ministers who answer them in a bunched-up way, one in particular.

**Madam Speaker:** But the hon. Member will recall direction from the Chair that if the Hon. Minister identifies the question, I would appreciate the supplementaries in relation to those questions.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Which is fair enough, Madam Speaker, and the Hon. Minister has answered it in that fashion. The questions are technical in nature, and she will immediately have identified that the questions arise from the rules. In fact, they are set out in the questions themselves, but also in the nature of the drafting, which I think can potentially give rise to difficulties.

But if I can ask my supplementary in respect of the last question, because it is fresh in my mind, and it is drawn from the answer given to Question, I think it is 11, no, sorry, 12. 11 and 12, indeed.

In effect, what the Hon. Minister is saying is that there are not any criteria. So that is it the, and she prays in aid, the reference to the ordinary meaning of the words social and medical. But does she not agree that what the NGO Action for Housing are saying actually does have merit? That in order to have certainty in these things, there ought to be a criteria against which potential applicants who want to benefit, who feel that they are entitled to be considered under social or medical categorisation can test whether the Housing Allocation Committee has decided an issue correctly or incorrectly, which could then indeed lead to an appeal.

Because she will know that in the press release issued by Action for Housing on the 13th of January, they complain about a lack of clear criteria for medical and social cases, and I am quoting from the press release. So cannot she, is it the position of the Government that the response to my question suggests that she has absolutely no intention whatsoever to attribute any criteria to these forms of categorisation and that what the Housing Allocation Committee are expected and required to do is simply using their discretion to use the ordinary meaning of those words, whatever that may mean.

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, we are going to continue to do exactly the same thing that they did when they were in Government.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Does she not accept that the answer she has just given is woefully and utterly inadequate? They are a new Government compared to us. Well, not new, actually.

They have been around now for four terms, and we are at the end of that fourth term. And the reality is that they were Elected on a promise that they would radically change the rules. These are new rules dated 2026.

420 Does she not agree with me that the answer that she has given me right now is wholly and utterly inadequate?

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** No, ma'am. The Government does not agree with the hon. Gentleman. The Government is not coming to the beginning of the end of its term, first of all.

425 The Government is at what is loosely called mid-term. But it is in the fourth of its successive terms and it is the public that will decide whether we will go on to have a fifth successive term or not. Not the hon. Members and certainly not in this place through their hyperbole.

430 We have actually recast the allocation criteria. What the hon. Gentleman is now asking us to do is to break down the criteria as to medical categorisation and social categorisation and to set up an objective criteria that people, he says, can appeal if they do not appear to fit it. What we have said already in this House, Madam Speaker, in relation to matters relating to social security, that if we set out the criteria objectively, all that happens is that people set out to make their case to fit the criteria even if the circumstances of their case would not otherwise fit the criteria.

435 And what we are therefore purporting to continue to do in the same manner that was done by four successive GSD administrations that in 1996 said that they were going to radically change Gibraltar, by the two-term GSLP administration that in 1988 radically did change Gibraltar, and by the four-term Association for the Advancement of Civil Rights party that also radically changed Gibraltar in its own way, is to leave.

440 Also indeed, Madam Speaker, I am reminded by the Father of the House whose memory, of course, extends beyond 1972, the integration with Britain Party's administration. (*Interjections*) I did not forget that Madam Speaker. The point that I was making was that I was talking about the period from 1972, which is the year after he was born and the year that I was born.

445 That all of those parties, in terms of allocation, have provided for social categorisation and medical categorisation and have allowed professionals to determine, not politicians, whether somebody should be medically categorised or whether somebody should be categorised as a social case. That is what we are going to continue to do. Instead of setting out a criteria which people can then try to shoehorn themselves into.

450 That might not sound radical to him, Madam Speaker, but it sounds correct to us. Given that he does not describe himself as a radical, I would have thought that he would have approached this as us sticking with what he might have called a conservative approach, the sort of thing he does like, and part of what he might claim as the golden legacy of the GSD, although we are still trying to find any golden pips left behind by them.

455 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Chief Minister has chosen to rise once again to defend the Hon. Minister because he must sense a weakness and therefore be in agreement with what I was putting to her in terms of the response that she gave. He has sensed a weakness in the response, and he is now wishing to give us a 50-year history lesson in a wholly partisan way by suggesting, quite pathetically, that the GSD did not do anything good for this place and this community. How ridiculous and pathetic.

I mean, I see the Hon. Chief Minister very tanned these days. Obviously, it must be as a result of his midterm break that he has had with his family. And good for him, good for him.

460 But he seems to have lost his political oomph by giving the response that he has given. The reality is it is actually quite shocking. We have had an answer by the Government saying that they have chosen not to change anything that has been done in the last 50 years, which we would say would be an improvement, by offering criteria in respect of social and medical categorisation on the basis that they are imputing in people who wish to avail themselves of that categorisation.

465 Magnified this, in effect, by saying that they will shoehorn if we give them transparency in respect of criteria. This is ridiculous and it is even more objectionable that it should come from those gentlemen and ladies who espouse socialist criteria.

**Madam Speaker:** May I ask the hon. Member now to come to the question?

470 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, of course. Madam Speaker, does the Hon. Minister, if I can ask her, she is the one who has a responsibility for this department, but I have no doubt the Chief Minister will be responding, do they not agree with what I have set out?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, we obviously do not agree with the hon. Gentleman. Well, first of all, Madam Speaker, we do not agree with people getting up in this House and talking about the colour of somebody else's skin. I thought that we had left those things behind many  
475 centuries ago.

And if I have been away with my children over the mid-term break, I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman thinks that that is something worth raising in this House in an attempt to seek to embarrass me. I could not be prouder to have been able to take time away with my children. And the fact that I have done it in a clime which was less inclement than it was here at the time, I do  
480 not think is a matter for this House to be debating.

Indeed, I have just told the House, Madam Speaker, when I got up at the beginning of the session, that I intend to make a statement and lay before the House the text of the treaty with the European Union. That is a seminal issue. And the hon. Gentleman is talking about whether I have got a tan or not.

485 It is ridiculous, Madam Speaker. So, we obviously do not agree. If the hon. Gentleman can calm down and listen to my answer rather than continue to perform as the House jester, he might actually benefit from understanding what it is I am going to say.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, a point of order. The Hon. Chief Minister has used that  
490 refrain in respect of me in the past.

**Madam Speaker:** I was about to call the Hon. Chief Minister to order on the use of that phrase before the Hon. Mr Bossino rose. But seeing as I speak, and the Hon. Mr Bossino does not take a seat very often when I do, I allowed him to raise it. But I was going to draw the Chief Minister's attention and ask him to refrain from the use of that phrase.

495 Can we now move on with the concise answer and the question?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I do not believe that calling an individual a jester is unparliamentary language. But I will of course move on from that if you ask me to do so. But I would ask that you do review Erskine May in that respect. Because saying that somebody is a court jester, I think is perfectly acceptable under Parliamentary practise. And the way that the hon.  
500 Gentleman behaves, I feel sometimes merits being dealt with in the descriptive way that I have sought to address today. Because really, we have a lot of serious issues to be getting on with in this House. And to have the hon. Gentleman say that I detected weakness in what the hon. Lady was saying, because I got up to answer a question that related to a period before her being a Minister is not to detect weakness. Madam Speaker, to detect weakness is to send the Hon. Mr  
505 Bossino to a Viewpoint programme that relates to matters that do not relate to his shadow responsibilities. To detect weakness...

**Madam Speaker:** Can we move on to answering the question precisely? Otherwise, we are going to go down a road of debating an issue which is nothing to do with the question.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, if you are ruling that I cannot address the things that the  
510 hon. Gentleman raised in his very lengthy preamble, which was extraordinarily party political, I

will move on simply on the basis that he has said that I have detected weakness and I think I am entitled to say that I did not detect weakness, that I was dealing with things which predated the Hon. Minister being the Minister with responsibility for Housing and that the weakness that I thought was demonstrated was when the Hon. Mr Bossino was being sent to a Viewpoint instead of the Hon. Mr Origo or the Hon. Mrs Ladislaus when the Viewpoint was relating to matters that they are shadow Members for.

515 But Madam Speaker, nobody is imputing any malefiders to anyone. What we are saying is, you set out a criteria, people will make the facts of their case fit that criteria even if they have to shoehorn it in. The hon. Gentleman needs to understand that.

520 You see, Madam Speaker, the big difference between the hon. Lady, me, on the one hand, and the hon. Gentleman, on the other hand, is that the hon. Lady and I have been Ministers. We are Ministers. The hon. Gentleman wants to be a Minister.

He does not understand the reality of how people behave. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition has been a Minister. When you are a Minister, Madam Speaker, you approach things in a slightly different way.

525 You approach them with responsibility. You approach them trying to ensure that what you do is designed to deliver what the public needs and not to enable people to be able to shoehorn themselves into a criteria simply because they want to gain an advantage. That is why we do not believe that we should set out a specific criteria on social or medical categorisation, and we should leave that to the experts in social services who assess those who make a claim to be on a social list or to the experts in the GHA who are on the board to determine medical categorisation, which I believe also includes individuals who are medically qualified from outside the GHA. That is the right thing to do, Madam Speaker. And to point that out, Madam Speaker, is not to impute weakness, is not to impute malafiders, but to talk about the colour of somebody's skin, Madam Speaker, that really does demonstrate how low someone can go.

530 **Madam Speaker:** Let us try and keep it to questions. Both sides have had a chance to speak outside questions, so I am going to ask you both question and answer.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Also, I appreciate, Madam Speaker, that the rules do not really allow the chair to control necessarily the answers, but it does allow control on this side of the House, and something that no doubt needs to be looked at. And, you know, we are talking about length of preambles, and we are talking about being political. I mean, what we have had from the other side is quite shocking in that regard.

540 But I will ask the question. Can the Hon. Minister for Housing please confirm, in effect, my understanding of the position is that the Government will not be heeding the calls which, from my personal perspective, are reasonable calls by Action for Housing, that there ought to be at least a guideline by way of criteria in respect of social and medical categorisation that it will not be shifting in relation to that issue, and that, in effect, what she has said is that she is allowing the Housing Allocation Committee to decide that issue on a discretionary basis, without any reference to guidelines, by way of criteria.

545 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer we gave a few moments ago.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I will try and go back to the order, as we have, I think, Madam Speaker, I have asked supplementary Questions in respect of 11 and 12, and in relation to 7, I think it is important, this is the point for the benefit of those listening and watching, is the references, which I found quite, shall we say, odd, when the Minister, in her interview to GBC, said that the reason for the increase in the period of time, I think it is 10, was the former requirement of residency, to 15, was in order to safeguard the identity of Gibraltar. Now, can I ask this initially? Why does that happen by increasing it by five years?

560 **Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, first of all, before I continue, I would like to point out that I am not weak, that I think that you say that I am weak, because I am a woman, and it seems to be, but I have to say this, because you are, all the time, (*Interjections*) No, no, it is.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, it is a point of order.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Lady, no.

**Madam Speaker:** There is a point of order being raised.

565 **Hon. D J Bossino:** It is imputing an attitude to women by me, which is completely and utterly, not just factually wrong, I can tell her, because I have been brought up by, you know, with three sisters, and I respect women, and I respect my wife and my sisters and my mother, right? But to impute misogyny, as the Hon. Chief Minister has done in the past, is, quite frankly, unparliamentary, and if she wants to do so, I think she ought to be bringing a substantive motion  
570 in relation to that issue, because that is completely, and she nods her head, and that is completely and utterly objectionable and wrong, and she should withdraw that.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, in response to the point of order made by the hon. Gentleman, as he knows, we have had cause, on the basis of facts which we have shared across the floor of the House, to raise issues about the hon. Gentleman's misogyny, before, as we see it,  
575 and, indeed, Madam Speaker, not just his misogyny, but also his approach to LGBTQ+ individuals. The... May I just say, just to finish my point, it is a point of order, and I will tell them on points of order.

On this issue, Madam Speaker, in the same way as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, misogyny is also, to an extent, in the eye of the beholder. We see it constantly from the hon. Gentleman, and we believe that there are objective reasons to see it, Madam Speaker. It is not to  
580 impute to the hon. Gentleman a motive, which would be contrary to the rules.

It is simply to set out our view of what the hon. Gentleman is doing in the way that he sets out those things, and we identify in him repeated approaches to the two female Members of the Government benches, which are best described, and only describable, as misogynistic.

585 **Madam Speaker:** All right. My ruling is this. It is improper to impute to the hon. Member that his comment that the Minister was weak arises from the fact that she was female.

There is no basis for that, and it is not a valid comment to make. There is no foundation for that, and it was not said in the context of a discussion on gender or anything else. It was a comment simply that the Minister was weak.

590 So, we will move on from that, and I am going to ask hon. Members to try and keep questions and answers short. I believe we were at the stage where the Hon. Minister was about to answer the supplementary on number 7.

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, we decided to move on from the 10-year and 15, because it means that you would have to be in Gibraltar for a longer period of time before you can get onto the housing waiting list, and we think that that then safeguards the housing stock that we have  
595 for people who genuinely want to be in Gibraltar or who are Gibraltarians.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** That is a point. Can the Hon. Minister not therefore distance herself from the comments that she made, perhaps erroneously, when she gave the interview, this is why I wanted to explore this issue with her, that actually it is got nothing to do with the identity of  
600 Gibraltar. What she has answered on her feet now, and does she not agree with me, that really it is to a safeguard, in effect, and I understand that, and I say legitimate aim, is to safeguard the housing stock of Gibraltar, which meets a very social need, which is in high demand, in respect of which the stock, she said in her interview, is limited in nature.

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, no, I do not agree.

605 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Okay, the hon. Lady, and she has the capability, and I have a tremendous respect for her, and I am not saying this because of the comments we have just had in respect to which the Speaker has ruled already, but I am trying to explore with her whether what she said, she ought to be distancing herself from, on GBC, because it was actually wrong given the answers she has just given. She says she does not agree. Can she say why she does not agree with what I  
610 have put to her?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, I just do not agree. There is nothing more to say.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Why does not the Hon. Minister not agree? She said on GBC that she had increased the length of time that somebody can be considered for an allocation for Government housing from 10 to 15 years, not for the reasons she's just given, which I think is perfectly  
615 legitimately and sound and wise, but actually to defend and safeguard the identity of Gibraltar. It just does not make sense.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, I will explain it to him if he likes, because the two are the same thing.

**Madam Speaker:** Move on now to Question 8.

620 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I am grateful. Question 8 related to why there was, in effect, a separate criteria being applied to Gibraltarians, registered Gibraltarians, who are not born in Gibraltar. I want to explore that a bit further, if I may, Madam Speaker, just to explain to those, for the sake of Hansard and to those watching, why it is that we are raising that point.

In respect of those Gibraltarians who are not born in Gibraltar, and there can be many  
625 circumstances in which that can happen, it does not mean that they are less Gibraltarian, it just means that due to circumstances or for medical reasons, you could be born in Spain, you could be born in the UK, or in any other place, for any reason, that individual, the criteria which is imposed in respect of that individual requires continuous living in Gibraltar for 15 years, not an aggregate amount, but a continuous living in Gibraltar for 15 years, whilst a separate criteria, which is a bit  
630 more flexible, is applied to those registered Gibraltarians who are born in Gibraltar. Why is that the case?

I think she can immediately recognise and realise that a potential injustice could be visited upon that Gibraltarian who happens, by bits of circumstances, not to have been born in Gibraltar.

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, quite contrary. I am trying to safeguard the Gibraltarian who  
635 has been here all his life, or all her life. If you are a Gibraltarian, and you have been born here, and you have to do 15 years.

Now, if you go to study, or if you have been, you have not been born here, but you came here when you were five, and you go off to study, you have been here for 15 years, so you have done your 15 years. The point is that you have to do your 15 years.

640 If you are abroad, if you are away from Gibraltar, you were born away from Gibraltar, but you are Gibraltarian, your mother is Gibraltarian, but you have never been in Gibraltar before, then we expect you, if you want to come back to Gibraltar and claim that you want housing, Government housing, then you would be required to stay here for 15 years, and at the very end, you have to do a length of, and that is for both, both criterias.

645 You have to do 12 months, continuous, here in Gibraltar, before you can go on to the Housing waiting List. This, at the same time, prevents anybody who is been living abroad to come to Gibraltar and go on the waiting list on day one, where there have been people here all their lives waiting for Government housing. This is the reason why.

650 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, but I think the injustice that I was talking about, because it is something that the Hon. Minister may consider amending. There is, and this is born, perhaps, from, I am trying to be as kind to the draftsman, a group of people who looked at this, the quality of the drafting, but the reality is, because in many respects it is quite lax and quite colloquial in nature in terms of the language which is used, which is devoid of definitions, and this is quite apart from the debates we just had in respect of social and medical categorisation, which was something more specific - I am talking about more general issues.

655 The requirement to be continuously living, it says the term used, living in Gibraltar for 15 years, is, I think, could be potentially very unfair. I understand what the Hon. Minister is trying to do in furtherance of trying to protect Gibraltar's housing stock. I get it, but what I am telling her is that it is possible there could be an injustice visited upon the individual, because the way I interpret it, unless she says I am wrong, and maybe she can, I think for the purpose of interpretation, would be useful if she did say, yes, Damon, you are wrong. The hon. Member is wrong. As I see it, if you have an individual who, for example, is born in Gibraltar for medical reasons, or indeed, I can think of individuals who are adopted, and they were born outside of this place, but are fully Gibraltarian, from Gibraltarian mother, father, or parents, and then, for whatever reason, because the parents decide to move to the Far East, because of the job opportunities to the father, let us say, or the mother, that 15-year continuous period is breached by a month, two months, a year, two years, and then that individual comes back, and then she, let us say, she decides to make an application for housing at the age of 18.

660 According to this, according to my interpretation, because that individual was born outside of Gibraltar, she would not be entitled to Government housing, unless she is then able to show 15 years continuous. So, add the 15 to the 18 years. But if she says I am wrong in that, then I would ask her to correct the record.

675 **Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, if the person has been away, the person has lived here, but then the parents decide to go away, that is what you are saying, we still count the amount of years that that person has been here because she is Gibraltarian. When she comes back after 10 years, she has already on five, and then she continues, but what is important is that the last year, the 12 months, has got to be continuous. So, it does.

It is fine. She is going to go away and live with her parents in another land, but she has already done five, six, seven years here. So, all she has to do is top up to get to the 15.

680 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes. Okay. Yes, yes, yes.

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Now, if you have never lived here, and you were born away, even though your mother is Gibraltarian, you have lived away all your life, then you would have to do 15 years in Gibraltar to qualify. But, if you have already been here, and then you go away, but then you come back again, because you are a Gibraltarian, the years that you have done here count.

685 **Hon. D J Bossino:** So, in effect, what the Hon. Minister is saying, just for a way of clarification, is that I was wrong in my analysis, so that there is not a separate criteria to be applied to those individuals who are not born in Gibraltar.

**Hon. P A Orfila:** That is correct, Madam Speaker. It was the first line. I said, there is no different criteria.

690 That was my answer.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** This will be useful, I think, for those who wish to challenge any position that may be taken by the Housing Allocation Committee in terms of referring to Hansard. Can I ask her to have a rethink and re-look at the drafting of this particular clause?

695 In fact, if she wants, we can have a discussion behind the Speaker's Chair, because I think it does give rise to confusion. There is a very specific requirement of continuous living in Gibraltar

only for those Gibraltarians who happen not to have been born in Gibraltar. And now, if she is saying that that is not correct and that that individual, in the example I gave her, can do an aggregate of 15, then that is fine, and I get it, and that would be, I think, addresses the potential unfair circumstances that could arise by, can be visited upon an individual who was not born in Gibraltar.

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Sorry, I will have a chat with him behind the Speaker's Chair, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on number 9?

**Hon. D J Bossino:** On number 9, Madam Speaker, and I am grateful for you to have pointed out where we are in relation to this bunch of questions. This refers, again, I think it could be an issue of drafting. If I can ask her this initially, this is a situation, I do not think she referred to it in her answer.

I think her answer was limited to unfortunate circumstances. I am not necessarily sure that the Hon. the Minister, had this in mind, but in effect, the criteria is very clearly set out. For an individual to be eligible for housing, one of the strict requirements is that the individual needs to be 18 or over, or 16 or over, and I will leave these words for now out in my explanation.

Well, it says, and is the head of the family, and is married. There is an element of description, is married, sorry, that is married, still a partner or a single parent having legal care and control of at least one child. That is the bit that I had in mind, and I could not see it initially.

But what I am suggesting to her is why is there a need to add head of the family? I mean, it is an unnecessary description which is not actually even defined, and I think it is odious to requirements, or you can literally delete it, and the rest would, I think, be fine. But I wanted to explore, this is my suggestion to her, but I may be wrong, and I want to explore with her whether that has any significance in effect.

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, you have to be head of a household in order to be the main tenant, which is why that is there.

**Madam Speaker:** Anything on number 10?

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, I am grateful, Madam Speaker. This is the question which related to those individuals who will automatically, by dint of the rules, not qualify. And it basically, in essence, what it is if you own a property or have owned a property, then you kind of qualify and you understand the reasons for that.

Now, what I was exploring with her is why is it that it is limited to property in Gibraltar and is set out expressly. The Hon. Minister has explained, in effect, that the reason why that is there is because it is administratively not impossible, but I suppose onerous to establish whether an individual has property outside of Gibraltar. And I think of the example that many people raise with us, that people do have properties in Spain and are the beneficiaries of social housing, Government housing in Gibraltar. What I suggest to her, again, by way of amendments of these rules, is that that be changed. Whilst I appreciate that there may be an extra layer of administrative burden, which may be imposed on her department to establish whether what I put to her is the case or not.

In other words, whether an individual, let us say, has a property, a villa in Spain. If you accept that in a defeatist way and actually put it in the rules, that actually, so long as you do not have a property in Gibraltar, you are fine. What I put to her is, is that delete the word in Gibraltar and at least give her and her department the facility or the possibility of establishing whether the individual applicant has a property outside of Gibraltar.

740 **Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, even if we would do this and identify property owners outside the jurisdiction, under the present scheme, it is limited only to Gibraltar in any case. However, can it be done? I suppose it could be done.

It would be very lengthy and a very complex and complicated exercise which may take years. However, should the hon. Gentleman ever find himself in my chair as Minister for Housing, then he may want to look and see who has property outside of Gibraltar and strike them off from the housing waiting list or dare I say, ask for the house back. But like I said, Madam Speaker, if he is ever in this chair, then he can do that. I am sure he will. He also wants to means-test - be my guest.

750 **Hon. D J Bossino:** What I am putting to the Hon. Minister is that what the Government is in effect showing here is a defeatist attitude. At least the relevant applicant should tick a box and by way of self-declaration say I do not have a property outside of Gibraltar or elsewhere. I mean, what answer, the quite flippant way in the way that the Minister has provided, does she not agree that in effect the Government is admitting defeat and is saying look, it is going to be so difficult administratively to establish whether somebody has a property in Spain, a villa in Sotogrande, for  
755 example, giving her an extreme view and is living in Varyl Begg.

I mean, how can that be? What all you need to do is at least put it to people who are applying saying you need to self-declare that you do not have a property outside of Gibraltar. And I dare say that actually looking at the register in Spain, let us say, or elsewhere, it may not be actually that difficult to establish.

760 **Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, we have the same defeatist attitude that the GSD had for 16 years then.

**Madam Speaker:** All right, next question.

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**Q13/2026**  
**Housing Department –**  
**Recent bad weather**

**Clerk:** Question 13, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Please provide details of the number of incidents the Housing Department has had to respond to as a consequence of the recent bad weather to include the nature of the incidents and the cost to address them.

770 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University.

**Minister for Housing and the Gibraltar University (Hon. P A Orfila):** Madam Speaker, the Housing Department via the Housing Works Agency responded to 579 reports from 27 January 2026 to 18 February 2026, that is in three and a half weeks, during the period of inclement weather. These are as follows: Rainwater infiltration through façade, 311 reports; Through the  
775 roof, 38; Through windows, 213 reports. The Housing Works Agency also received reports that 17 lifts had broken down due to the rainwater infiltration.

In addition to the above, the Housing Works Agency also received various reports of rainwater ingress through the Mid Harbours' podium. Numbers are still increasing due to the weather infiltration that we had, and reports are still being received. The cost for all the above is not known yet due to the high number of reports received.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** It is, the Hon. Minister quite accurately and rightly says that they are high in number in terms of the reports received and it is the rather extreme inclement weather that we have been subjected to during that period that she refers to. But is she able to say at this stage when she will have sights of the costings to her Department in respect of having to attend to the Housing Works Agency which comes under her to attend to these issues?  
785

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, the team is on it.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Is she able to identify when she will be in a position to respond to the question I asked?

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, no.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Does she know, does she have any, I mean, when does she expect, I mean, I may be asking the same question but given her experience and the time that she has been in office and I appreciate that this is a big number of cases and incidents that have been dealt with is, can she not give me a period of time, a month, two months, a year before this information is readily available?  
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**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, no.  
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**Hon. D J Bossino:** She made a reference to some of the issues which I think she mentioned the podium level at Mid Harbours, and I think in respect of another state she mentioned another issue. Is it quite apart from the plaster addressing which has been basically she has had to deal with through the Housing Works Agency and fixing windows and all the rest of it, it suggests to me that there may be issues which are deeper and more ingrained in terms of the structure of the buildings or am I wrong? When she is referring for example to the podium level at Mid Harbours is this something which structurally needs to be looked at in order to fix? Does she have an idea of whether she is looking at those aspects in order to fix them and does she have an estimate of cost of what it will mean in order to fix those more structural aspects unless she says that I am wrong in my interpretation of the answer she has given.  
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**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, the podium level was leaking; water was coming through. It is not structural. Every house in Gibraltar has had water infiltration at some point, somewhere. So, we are looking into it. It is a huge number that we really need to examine, and then we shall tell you what the cost might be. But at the moment, things are being looked into.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Is the hon. Lady also able to identify, I do not think she has, but I think it is drawn from the exchange we have just had, what estates have been impacted? She has given me the number; she has helpfully given me broadly the incidents, the nature of the incidents which had to be attended to. But is she able to identify which estates were affected?  
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**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Gentleman did not ask that question, but I can tell him that out of the 17 lifts that we had down, we had three in Mid Harbours, one in Laguna, two in Glacis. Six are down; all the rest are now working. But as far as water ingress is concerned, I cannot say we had 32 people who had water ingress in Laguna, we had 53, we could, but it is an exercise that I would need my team to provide for you.  
815

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I fully accept that. It just occurred to me whilst she was giving me the answers to the supplementary questions I put to her, and indeed she is right, it would be unfair of me to expect her to have that information to hand, and I can file a question. Just one final question, when she refers to the Housing Works Agency, are those works, and excuse my ignorance, done by the Agency directly itself within the staffing complement that it has, or are these works subcontracted to private entities?  
820

825 **Hon. P A Orfila:** Within the Agency we have people who have expertise in certain fields, but we do subcontract.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I can ask a question specifically in relation to that. I am assuming that the Hon. Minister does not have that answer in terms of which companies did which works.

**Hon. P A Orfila:** Madam Speaker, no.

830 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

## EMPLOYMENT, EQUALITY, CULTURE AND TOURISM

### Q14/2026

#### Rooke Development site – Development of a Youth Centre

835 **Clerk:** Questions to the Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism. Question 14, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Further to Question No. 296/2025, can the Minister now confirm whether the plans for the development of a Youth Centre at the Rooke Development site will go ahead?

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

840 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, we are still in discussions with the developer.

845 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may just refer to an excerpt from Hansard; the last time I asked this question to the Hon. Minister. I posed a similar question in March 2025, now 12 months ago. The response given at the time, when I prodded whether or not the plans for the Rooke site had formed part of the DPC application of the developer, the Hon. Minister said, "I would need to check with the developer and, I quote:

By my last meetings with them I gave them what my requirements were space-wise and they were going to get back to me with what space was available for us to use.

850 Has the Minister had these discussions with the developer, and what came about from those discussions? From the requirements and specifications he was asking, is it the case that the space available no longer meets the Minister's requirements, or can he explain why these are still undergoing negotiations?

855 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, I did have discussions with the developers. The area that was originally intended to be used, around the Four Dock area, presented some issues with regard to requirements and water levels. We are trying to look at a different area that we are able to use. This has affected other parts of the development and not just the Youth Centre, so we are trying to make everything work cohesively for them

860 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, when the hon. Minister says he is trying to identify other areas, does he mean that they are trying to identify an area within the Rooke site development, or is his Ministry now looking at different locations for the construction of the Youth Centre?

**Hon. C P Santos:** At the Rooke area.

865 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, given the issues that the hon. Minister has alighted to, have they ascertained a specific location within the Rooke site development on which the Youth Centre can actually be built? I understand there is a series of different projects and buildings that are supposed to go into this development, and it would be interesting to know whether they have been able to ascertain a particular site within the Rooke development.

**Hon. C P Santos:** At the moment, that is what we are still discussing the different buildings that need to be built and seeing where the best location would be for each.

870 **Hon. G Origo:** Finally, Madam Speaker, can the Hon. Minister confirm who is going to be funding this Youth Centre? And may I ask, by way of further supplementary, whether this was part of the premium paid by the developer when purchasing the site from the Government?

**Hon. C P Santos:** This was not part of the premium, so we are still in discussion as to how the funding model would work for the Youth Centre.

875 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, if I may take the answer given by the hon. Minister: if the hon. Minister is saying that they are still in discussions with respect to funding, if it is the case that the Youth Centre will no longer be developed at the Rooke site, is he admitting that the Government may be the one responsible for the funding of the Centre?

880 **Hon. C P Santos:** There is nothing to admit. Government projects are the responsibility of the Government, so wherever funding comes from whether we collaborate from a public sector/private sector perspective or solely from the Government it is always our responsibility how the project develops.

**Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

885

**Q15/2026**  
**Tour operators –**  
**Tickets sold**

**Clerk:** Question 15, the Hon. G Origo.

890 **Hon. G Origo:** Can the Government confirm how many “Alternative Tours” have been given by tour operators and how many tickets have been sold in respect of each tour given in 2025 to date, broken down by month?

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

**Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, these tours are operated by private tour operators; it is obviously not Government information.

895 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware whether this tour is still operational? And is the Minister saying he does not know, even roughly, how many tickets have been sold, not least given that this was an initiative launch in conjunction between his own Ministry and the Ministry of the Environment?

900 **Hon. C P Santos:** I would not know how many tickets are sold, in the same way that I do not know how many private “gold tickets” by Victory Tours are sold. We are here to market the product. This was an alternative combination of Upper/Lower Rock attractions we devised

together with the industry. How many of these they sell I'm completely unaware, I would not have those numbers at all.

905 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I note that the last time I asked this question, a similar answer was given by the Minister that this was done by private operators and therefore he did not have the information. But given that I asked the question, I would have thought the Minister might be interested in assessing whether the number of tickets sold or tours given is aligning with the aims and objectives of this tour.

910 I take a moment, if I may, to take the Hon. Minister to a Government press release on the 'Gibraltar Alternative Tour', Press Release No. 334/2024 issued in May 14<sup>th</sup> 2024 and I quote:

915 The Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Tourism have been working together to set-up and launch this product. The aim behind this is to diversify our own products and offer alternatives to returning visitors. The Minister for the Environment said: "This initiative will not only increase revenue but will also serve to decongest the Nature Reserve. [The Minister for Tourism was quotes saying] "The tour can be purchased on the Nature Reserve website as well as through the Gibraltar Tourist Board website.

920 These are two Government sites. How is the Hon. Minister then saying that they are going to assess the success or not of this tour if they are not even bothered to check how many tours are being sold? Is that the position the Hon. Minister is taking?

925 **Hon. C P Santos:** Well, if we use terminology like "can't be bothered" it is not something that I would ever use or even consider within the work that I do. So, I cannot be expected to go to every tour operator and ask them for figures of every tour that they offer because there are many tour operators, there are many travel agents, there are many tours. I understand that he wants to try and make this feel like it is a failure, but my job is not to sell an alternative tour. My job promote the marketing product. That is what I am doing. (*Interjections*) Can you tell the hon. people to stop speaking from a sedentary position please Madam Speaker? (*Interjections*)

930 **Madam Speaker:** Is that the Hon. Minister's answer?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Yes.

935 **Madam Speaker:** Any other supplementary?

**Hon. G Origo:** Yes. (*Interjections*)

**Madam Speaker:** Order!

940 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I do not believe that the Hon. Minister answered the supplementary question posed. I asked, how does he propose to asses that the aims and objectives of this tour, which was clearly stated a Government press release to (a) decongest and (b) to raise revenue, is being measured if he is not interested in the number of tour operators that are being carried out. Can the Hon. Minister please answer how he proposes to assess either the  
945 success or failure of this tour alternative if we are not given the statistics to be able to make the assessment.

950 **Hon. C P Santos:** The people that need to make the assessment whether it is a successful tour or not are the tour operators that are offering this tour. So for us (*Laughter*) sorry to be laughing for those of you not watching on TV, there is a lot of muttering of course from "muttering myrtle" on the other side. It is unparliamentary so I apologise.

So, how am I going to assess whether decongestion has been achieved? It has not but we have seen that that is never going to happen when we are seeing that more and more tourists go to the Upper Rock.

955 So, will it increase revenue? There is more revenue coming into Gibraltar from all different avenues regarding tourism including the Upper Rock Nature Reserve tickets and all numbers with regards to tourism and hotel nights and all that are on the rise.

Therefore, I cannot assess the success of an individual tour unless I decide to go into all individual tours. This is an alternative tour that was offered as part of the product that we keep  
960 on adding more and more work and effort into increasing and improving.

Does the hon. Member want me to go to every tour operator and ask them to tell dates and data? I am not going to do that because I have other things to do. (*Interjections*) (*Banging on desks*).

965 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, can I ask the Hon. Minister, or at least put it to him in these terms, given the recent closure of the old Cable Car, that promotion of products such as the Alternative Tour, like this one, is even more vital today to ensure the decongestion of the Upper Rock? And I say this on the premise that the last time I asked this question, I referred to the Hon. Minister having looked at this press release where it said that it was going to be advertised on two  
970 Government websites. Having checked it myself, there were not being advertised on this website. Having checked it again this week before filing the question and before taking the question today on the order paper, I note that I was still no longer being advertised on the Government website.

So, can I put to the Hon. Minister, whether he was serious in his assertions that this would serve to decongest the Upper Rock if the Hon. Minister is not even bothered to promote his own  
975 initiatives?

**Hon. C P Santos:** The only thing that I am not going to be bothered to do, if he keeps on using that word, is not bother answering him. (*Interjections*)

980 **Madam Speaker:** I am resisting the temptation to shout "Order", because you are luring me into the idea that we are suddenly the House of Commons and not the Gibraltar Parliament. But if I have to call the House to order, I will. Yes, Hon. Minister.

**Hon. C P Santos:** We are advertising this tour in the website. It is under Rock Tours under Alternative tours if he has not got there. Maybe he has not bothered going into that page. Maybe  
985 that's what's happened, I don't know what you checked but I can send you the link.

**Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

**Q16/2026**  
**Cruise terminal –**  
**Ticketing office opening hours**

990 **Clerk:** Question 16, the Hon. G Origo.

**Hon. G Origo:** Can the Government confirm whether the cruise terminal ticketing office is opened on weekends?

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

995 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker there is no cruise terminal ticketing office.

**Hon. G Origo:** Can I ask the Hon. Minister whether if not a Ticketing Office it would have been referred to as a Tourist Information Office that is normally situated outside the terminal where persons who come off these ships usually would habitually buy two operating tickets and tickets for the Upper Rock Nature Reserve, that is the ticketing office I was referring to and it may be that it is called the information office instead of the ticketing one.

**Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, I would encourage the hon. Member to bother to get the correct information which is something that keeps on happening. That is clearly a tourist information office and not a ticketing office. Tourists cannot buy tickets there directly. We do not sell tickets at the cruise liner terminal.

But, yes, to answer his question: the information office is open every time there is a cruise ship an hour before arrival and an hour after departure regardless of the day of the week.

1010 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful that he has clarified that there is a tourist information office, and I apologise if I referred erroneously to a ticketing office. My understanding was that this information office used to if not sell tickets at least provide information to persons coming off the terminal as to how to acquire them. So, my apologies in that respect.

1015 But can he confirm, as he has now stated, that it is open every single weekend, including bank holidays, when there are ships that have called at our port?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, Madam Speaker. The tourist information office is there for cruise ships; therefore, it is always open an hour before arrival, throughout the time the cruise ship is docked in Gibraltar, and an hour after departure.

**Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

**Q17/2026**  
**Cruise liner arrivals –**  
**Government Statistics website**

**Clerk:** Question 17, the Hon. G Origo.

1025 **Hon. G Origo:** According to the Government Statistics website, the total number of cruise liner arrivals in 2025 stood at 221. For what reasons did the forecasted 240 cruise calls in 2025 not materialise?

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

1030 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, cruise liners typically block-book slots two to three years in advance. These cancellations are not necessarily cancellations of visits to Gibraltar in particular, but often due to the release of slots booked far in advance. Agents will not always advise their specific reason for cancellation, even after direct enquiry.

1035 Some of the released or cancelled slots may have been booked by other companies, so it is not as simple as saying that 19 calls did not materialise.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. Minister for confirming that it was indeed 19 calls that were cancelled. From those 19, does he know how many were cancelled outright, how

1040 many were deferred to 2026 or 2027, and how many were rerouted to different ports? Does he have the details with respect to those cancellations?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, it does not really work like that. We might have had 25 cancelled and six rebooked; it is not necessarily the difference that was cancelled. Cruise ships work 18 to 24 months in advance. They block-book throughout different ports until they decide on the itinerary; then they start cancelling and changing.

1045 There are many different reasons, weather conditions, industrial issues in other ports, itinerary changes. It is not that we had 19 calls cancelled and that was it. The disparity of the numbers is 19, but that does not reflect the full movement within bookings.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, can I ask the Hon. Minister whether, for those calls which appeared to have been cancelled given that 240 were forecast and 221 materialised any engagement was carried out by his Ministry or by the Gibraltar Tourist Board with those tour operators that did not ultimately call at Gibraltar, having initially indicated that they would? If such engagement was undertaken, what was learned from it, and how are we proposing to improve the product or address the issues that led to cancellation?

1055 **Hon. C P Santos:** As I have already mentioned, this is not something that happens exclusively in Gibraltar. There are bookings made across multiple ports to secure berths. One of the issues with smaller ports like Gibraltar is the limited number of berths we can offer. Companies will book and then adjust their itineraries accordingly.

1060 It usually has nothing to do with the product itself. Normally, we do not receive detailed feedback, but it tends to be itinerary-based rather than destination-based. It is maybe someone who has booked 20 calls, cancels three and then stays with 17, and it is that type of thing working with itinerary. For example, eight days ago, for example, we only had 53 calls booked for 2028; when I checked today, there were over 150. It depends how far ahead they book and how much they book. We cannot control that because we need to take their word at time of book that those are the call that they are going to make. This is not an isolated problem in Gibraltar, this is how the industry operates.

1070 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, so is the position that the Hon. Minister is stating that, if he has a situation where a cruise liner has booked a slot and a berthing in Gibraltar for a particular date and then, coming up to that date, cancels, that there is absolutely no engagement with that operator for the reasons as to the cancellation? Is that what the Hon. Minister is stating?

1075 **Hon. C P Santos:** It does not tend to happen at the last minute. We do get advance notice of this, so they do because as soon as they plan their itineraries, they start cancelling, and as soon as they sell their itineraries and they see what itineraries are more popular, that is when it happens. It does not tend to happen, or I am advised it does not happen with very little notice; it happens a few months in advance. So, yes, we do not tend to engage with everyone who decides to cancel a call when we know that this is industry practice. This is not isolated to Gibraltar. I have said it three times; I can say it the next time he asks another supplementary, but that is industry practice.

1080 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, whilst I may take the Minister's point that this may or may not be industry practice, does he not see the failings in not engaging with a cruise liner to ascertain why they have cancelled? It may be that they have cancelled many months in advance or not, but does he not see the benefits or the fruits that such an engagement could have for those that cancelled? I am not asking him to engage with every tour operator that calls at the Port of Gibraltar, but for the ones who say or indicate that they are and then decide not to, does he not see the benefit of having that engagement, even though he is saying that it is industry practice, so his Ministry is not going to do so?

1090 **Hon. C P Santos:** We are constantly engaging with cruise line operators. We go to conferences, we go to meetings, we meet them all the time, we engage with them on calls, we talk about product. This is a normal practice that we find in small ports. Therefore, when I meet with a cruise  
1095 liner and we discuss how our relationship can progress, I do not start asking them why, out of 15 calls, they cancelled two of them when we know more or less why it is when there is a technical issue, when there is a weather issue, we know that that is the case but normally it is not destination-based. It is not, "Why are they cancelling?" "I am going to ask them..." We meet and engage with them throughout the year and we have very meaningful conversations, and that is why we saw a rise of 90% in cruise calls, because there is still a lot of interest, and we are still getting more interest now after there is stability and certainty with the Treaty. We are engaging with them all the time, at all different times. We go to all different events, different conferences we are constantly in touch with them. We just engage in more meaningful conversations than, "Why did you cancel one of your bookings?"

1100 **Madam Speaker:** The Hon. Mr Bossino had a question?

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I am grateful, Madam Speaker. Is the effect of what the Hon. Minister is saying in his responses to my hon. Friend Mr Origo that he has absolutely no concern whatsoever by the fact that we have had a reduction in number 19 from the forecasted figure of 240 for 2025 to 221? He has no issues with that whatsoever, and it is run-of-the-mill and it is what is expected?  
1105 May I ask him this: when a forecasted number is published by his Department, is it also plausible and possible for that number to also go up? Because basically it is simply a notional figure based on the bookings, the advance bookings, as he said that his Department receives.

**Hon. C P Santos:** I am not concerned, because this is 19 calls from one cruise liner that has decided to no longer come to Gibraltar. I would be worried if that was the pattern, but the number  
1110 of calls can rise and can fall, and it depends on dates and berthing and what days they want to come to Gibraltar and availability. As I have explained, a lot of companies block-book and you know more or less that some of them you are going to lose, but you cannot, at the time they are booking. The numbers that are published are numbers of bookings. It is not a vast number of cancellations. It is not like we have lost 50%. It is a number that keeps on varying, but it is not, as  
1115 I said, a Gibraltar problem. This is how cruise lines work, especially in ports that have two to three berths. In major ports as well, I can imagine that is the same issue, but we are not a big port like Barcelona or Miami, so I do not know how those work, but I know full well how it works for at least smaller ports and ports within the Mediterranean. So, we have not lost a cruise line; those 19 calls are not from one cruise line.

1120 **Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

#### Q18-20/2026

#### Future Job Strategy scheme – People currently enrolled; Full time employment; Recoveries of salary

**Clerk:** Question 18, the Hon. G Origo.

1125 **Hon. G Origo:** Can the Government confirm how many people are currently enrolled on the Future Job Strategy scheme, of those enrolled how many months has each person been on the scheme for?

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

1130 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 19 and 20.

**Clerk:** Question 19, the Hon. G Origo.

1135 **Hon. G Origo:** Can the Government confirm how many people who have enrolled on the Future Job Strategy scheme to date have moved on to full time employment with the business or department that they were employed under?

**Clerk:** Question 20, the Hon. G Origo.

1140 **Hon. G Origo:** Can the Government confirm whether it has made any recoveries of salary contributions from private businesses who have taken part in the Future Job Strategy scheme, for failure in offering those enrolled with full-time employment on conclusion of the scheme?

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

1145 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, as at 18th February 2026, 866 trainees are employed by the employment scheme under CTCL, ETCL and SETCL.

Three months and under: 414 trainees;  
Four to six months: 206 trainees;  
Seven to nine months: 100 trainees;  
1150 Ten to twelve months: 43 trainees; and  
Over 13 months: 103 trainees.

The following number of candidates enrolled on our employment scheme have been employed directly by their work placement providers:

1155 2023 – 115 trainees;  
2024 – 121 trainees; and  
2025 – 114 trainees.

1160 No recoveries of salary contributions have been made from private businesses who have failed to offer those enrolled full-time direct employment on conclusion of the scheme.

1165 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, I am taking supplementaries on Question 18. How many are currently enrolled on the scheme? From the figures he gave, he did say that those who have been 13 months or above constitute 103 individuals. Does he know, from the information that he has available or provided to him, what is the longest a single person has served under the scheme?

**Hon. C P Santos:** I do not. I would need notice of that question.

1170 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, can I ask the Hon. Minister whether his Ministry has undertaken any analysis into understanding the causes for extended enrolment under the scheme? My understanding is that persons under the scheme are intended to serve six months, nine months or twelve months under a particular employment, with the aim of them obtaining full-time employment. So is there any cause for concern for persons who are experiencing extended enrolments, because we have about 103 persons who have been over a year enrolled in the scheme, and some could have been many years, but we just do not have that information before us.

1175

**Hon. C P Santos:** We do have a study on this. We do look at all the figures and all the data, and we look at plans on how we can make employment more accessible. To add to these numbers, just so that we are clear, it is CTCL, ETCL and ACTCL, and within those all our apprenticeship programmes are added to this. So, a lot of these people who are over 13 months are people who  
1180 are under an apprenticeship scheme that takes two to three years. That is one of the percentages of the numbers over 11 months, because usually it is 3, 6, 11 months; then after that you cannot stay within the same company you would need to look for alternative employment or go to another company, except if you are with the Training Centre.

1185 So, there is a large number of young people who are over 13 months because of that. A lot of the people within that number are also people within the Supported Employment programme. So, we are looking at how we can do a subsidy scheme and look at different ways that we can get people into direct employment, be it with the placement provider or another provider.

1190 So, we do analyse the data all the time, and that is why we keep on offering different apprenticeships. People here as well are from the Skills for Care apprenticeship. Every apprenticeship we do is supported by this training programme as well. So, a lot of these numbers are because of the involvement and length of the apprenticeship.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, still on Question 18, can I ask the Hon. Minister whether his Department in any aspect monitors those businesses who enrol on the scheme for the purposes of ensuring that they are complying with the object of the scheme, which is to give those persons  
1195 full-time employment? Is it the case or can we see that in some cases there are employers who repeatedly, if I can put it in a conveyor-belt type system, keep on recruiting individuals for the same roles? I would ask whether the Hon. Minister can confirm whether his Department ensures that these businesses are actually complying with the obligations under the scheme, given that the Government is paying for the employment salaries.

1200 **Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker, we do have a compliance officer, as well as labour inspectors who can also be involved in this process, but we do have our own compliance officer and the department as well is constantly overseeing that we do not have people abusing the system, or at least visibly abusing the system.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

1205 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** I have got a question on 19, but I think my hon. Colleague wants to go there, so I will see if he probes it.

**Madam Speaker:** The Hon. Mr Origo.

1210 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, Question 19, for the purposes of Hansard, concerns how many people enrolled on the scheme led to full-time employment. I was given a series of statistics over the last couple of years with respect to '23, '24 and '25. Can I ask the Minister, from the data he gave, do we know the total number of enrolments on the scheme compared to those who actually attained full-time employment, so you can work out what is the percentage conversion of those who are enrolling and then actually attain the objectives and aims of the scheme, which is to get full-time employment?  
1215

**Hon. C P Santos:** I missed a part of that because I was getting some information, so if I do not fully answer, remind me of what I have not answered.

1220 It is regarding the number of trainees who get employed by their companies, right? That is what you have asked me? Okay. I do not have the numbers of the total enrolled in that year, because I have got '23, '24, '25 and I have got the numbers employed. Remember that it is very difficult the data given, 866, is who is there now so it is very difficult for me to know what the number was for 2025 and what the percentage was.

1225 We have to remember as well that a lot of people join the scheme and sometimes they leave  
and get another job not necessarily related to what they are doing in the scheme. It is a way for  
us to train them. Maybe someone goes in and works in a construction company for three months  
and then they leave the scheme and they are not employed directly by that company; they are  
employed by another company.

1230 I would need to have more analysis on the data to tell you what percentage of people were in  
that span as well, which is a complicated one because it is between 3, 6 and 11 months, years  
crossover, so numbers are constantly it is a number that is constantly evolving. That is why I stated  
in particular 18th February, as it is always changing.

1235 **Hon. Dr K Azopardi:** Well, yes, this is the thing that intrigues me. When I heard the original  
statistics the Hon. Minister referred to the fact that he had a study. Just looking at the numbers  
he has given and I appreciate the explanation he has just given that the 866 is at a particular point  
in time in February, so it does not really correlate to the previous statistics on '23, '24 and '25  
where he has given an average of about 100-plus people who get jobs, he mentioned the study,  
so I was trying to understand to what extent in their study they are tracking employment.

1240 The 115, 121 and 114 is presumably a statistic that reveals people who have started with the  
scheme and end up being employed with an employer in the scheme but does not include the  
number that he has just alluded to, which is someone who might join the scheme but then gets  
employed with someone else. But in the study, do they track that statistic so that they have an  
understanding of the worth, if I can put it that way, of the scheme in either placing someone in  
full-time employment in due course or at least acting as a holding base with an employer while  
they then find full-time employment with another employer?

1245 Do they have a statistic that allows them to get that sense, not just of people who get employed  
eventually with that particular employer but that get employed anyway? Because I think that  
would be quite important to do so. If it is not in the study, would he agree that it should be a  
tracked number in future?

1250 **Hon. C P Santos:** I will check whether that is a statistic that we are combining, because EDEC  
the scheme works is not part of the Department of Employment as such, per se, so I get two  
different streams of data. But I am going to check if we actually combine those two streams and  
have our own data on that.

1255 **Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, If I may now finally go to Question 20, which concerns the  
recoveries of contributions made by Government from private businesses. I note that the Hon.  
Minister stated I think it was that there have been zero recoveries to date. I understand that this  
scheme has been around, I think, since the inception of this new Government. It was under an  
umbrella, but since 2011 we have had this unemployment scheme, which I think was the name it  
was given before.

1260 From the data we have, there are about 866 persons now on the scheme, so we can take it  
that there have been thousands of different enrolments for different jobs within different  
departments. Is the Hon. Minister therefore saying that, of the thousands of different jobs and  
opportunities available, he is satisfied that there has been no case for abuse by any private  
business or department in respect of the workings of the scheme?

1270 **Hon. C P Santos:** What I can say is that a lot of people who do not complete the scheme I do  
not want you to feel like what the question is implying is that people do the scheme, they do the  
11 months and then they decide that they are going to drop someone and then they are going to  
get someone else and that is how it rotates. What happens is that a lot of people are trained. It is  
a training scheme, and they train in hopes that they find someone that is adequate for them. But  
maybe sometimes people do not finish the 11 months; sometimes it is a probationary period, and

it does not work; the training may not have been fit for the business and they cannot employ them.

1275 So, we have not found cause to make any recovery of salaries. There are many different reasons why the person does not get employed. There are people who also find that they do not need that role or that person, and a lot of people do not because it is part of an apprenticeship programme and they get passed on somewhere else. So, the number is always, as I said, like a revolving door of people coming in and out, and we are working as hard as we can to provide  
1280 people as many opportunities within and into employment.

**Hon. G Origo:** Madam Speaker, can I ask the Hon. Minister what process is engaged after the conclusion of a particular term in the scheme enrolment? I am trying to ascertain what kind of monitoring process is in place to ensure that those businesses who are taking the benefit of the Government providing these salaries for these persons to be given training are actually providing  
1285 legitimate reasons for not giving them employment.

One of the things the Hon. Minister just said is that perhaps the person may not be a good fit for the business, but surely there is some kind of process or assessment in allocating certain people to certain departments or certain businesses, and presumably because they are a good fit  
1290 for working there. So, can I ask the Minister, in respect of processes after the conclusion of a term, what it is that the department does in this respect most of the time, if someone completes the process?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Most of the time if someone completes the process is because they are going to stay on. Usually it is not common to see that they do the 11 months and then it is like, "Surprise,  
1295 we are not there." So, we have three officers that are constantly in touch with the companies and businesses about finding a perfect fit. It is according to what vacancies are available. If I would like to be an artist and there is no gallery that will hire me, there is no way I will be able to get that job. So, it is about finding, according to vacancies, offering people the chance to go into those  
1300 positions.

So, we do monitor the process, and we ensure, for example, that not one company keeps on getting different people for the same role and it does not work out. That is part of what we do, because the office looks at that data.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

1305

**Q21/2026**  
**Elite Scholarship Grants –**  
**Awarded to each applicant**

**Clerk:** Question 21, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide a breakdown of the thirteen individuals who received  
1310 Elite Scholarship Grants totalling £9,750, showing how much was awarded to each applicant and how the criteria mentioned in answer to Question No. 728 of 2024 was applied in respect of each?

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

**Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker,  
1315 with all due respect to the hon. Member, who knows I hold him in the highest esteem, I had to look at clues in the question and refer to the previous question referenced to understand what was being asked, because the correct title is the Elite Funding Scheme.

1320 I also wish to clarify that the Elite Funding Scheme is a bursary and not a scholarship scheme. I  
tell you this because initially, when I received “Elite Scholarship Grants”, I did not even think it was  
my question, because I thought it was something to do with education, and then when I looked  
into the question I realised what was meant.

Of the 13 individuals who received funding:

1325 11 received a sum of £250 each to cover materials, tools or extra classes needed, as not already  
funded by the Department of Education;

One individual received £1,000, as they were not in receipt of any funding;

The last individual received £6,000, as their tuition fees exceeded that offered by the  
scholarship from the Department of Education.

1330 All awards were decided based on the criteria mentioned before, that is that the individuals  
are studying at an accredited vocational school, and the awards were decided by a board  
convened by the Ministry of Culture.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker, can I just clarify to see that I have actually understood  
something correctly? Eleven of the individuals received £250 each; that was for materials one  
takes it required for the course and so on. The one that received the highest was £6,000 — that is  
1335 because he was in receipt, or not in receipt, of any other scholarship funding? And then one  
individual received £1,000? Why, I do not know for what.

**Hon. C P Santos:** The £1,000 was for the person that did not receive funding, because he is in  
education prior to what the Department of Education scholarship covers. It is not an  
1340 undergraduate programme; it is before the undergraduate programme. So that individual receives  
a scholarship from the school because he is an early artist and the school funds him, but he applied  
for extra tuition outside of school classes, so that person received £1,000.

The person that received £6,000 is a person who was in receipt of the normal education  
scholarship, which is £9,750 or £9,625 or something like that, but his tuition fees were something  
1345 like £16,000, so that is why we topped up.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** I see that. So, for the £6,000, it means that the individual received a scholarship  
where the Government catered for his tuition fees, and he receives his normal maintenance grant  
as an individual. So, the £6,000 went towards the tuition fees where the Department of  
Education’s total contribution fell short by £6,000 and is therefore not for the individual to top up  
1350 his maintenance grant. Is that the correct interpretation?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Madam Speaker that is correct.

**Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

1355

**Q22/2026  
Gibraltar Training Centre –  
Next Intake of Trainees**

**Clerk:** Question 22, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** When is the next Intake of Trainees expected at the Gibraltar Training Centre,  
indicating what courses and at what level these are planned to be offered?

1360 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

1365 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Our last intake for Level 1 started last November 2025. The date for the next intake of apprentices is currently being assessed. This will be determined by reviewing existing programme loadings, instructor availability and overall staff workloads.

At present, we are managing two large ongoing intakes, both of which require significant instructor involvement, including managing several work-based assessments per apprentice to ensure successful completion of the courses.

1370 The new intake date is under review. This will be no earlier than 2027. We are, however, accepting applications for the upcoming intake, with a commencement date to be confirmed once operational capacity has been determined and instructors are fully available to support a new cohort.

The courses to be offered for subsequent intakes remain unchanged, these being, initially:

City & Guilds Level 1 Extended Certificate in Construction Skills;

1375 EAL NVQ Level 2 Performing Engineering Operations, progressing to EAL NVQ Level 3 Engineering Maintenance (Electrical);

EAL NVQ Level 3 Engineering Maintenance (Mechanical);

City & Guilds NVQ Level 2 Diploma in Plumbing;

City & Guilds NVQ Level 2 Diploma in Building Maintenance Operations.

1380 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, thank you. I am a sweet guy, as the Minister said. I was comparing that to a previous answer given by a written question. In previous answers, I know there was an estimated completion date of December 2025, so a lot of the trainees involved would have finished but in the updated information, the NVQ Level 2 in Construction Trade I will call it that which gives the individual qualified craftsman status, he has mentioned plumbing, but I failed to note any other, 1385 for example, bricklaying and so on. Are those not being offered at Level 2? In other words, there is nothing beyond the Level 1 certificates being offered, so this individual falls short of being a fully qualified craftsman.

**Hon. C P Santos:** No, Madam Speaker. Bricklaying and Painting are offered under the City & Guilds NVQ Level 2 Diploma in Building Maintenance Operations,

1390 **Hon. E J Reyes:** So, the qualifications are obtained as part of a collective qualification rather than an individual specialised trade. Am I correcting that interpretation?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Correct. They do two trades as part of the Building Maintenance Operations, specialising in one, but I think they actually do two different trades.

1395 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Fine. And because he also wears the Minister's hat for employment, is the Minister fully satisfied that an individual who gets that Level 2 qualification will then be accepted by a potential employer as being a fully-fledged and qualified bricklayer or painter, for example? Can you reassure this House that that is a valid qualification that allows entry to that employment?

**Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, that is the requirement from the industry the Level 2.

**Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

1400

**Q23/2026  
Training Centre –  
Instructors**

**Clerk:** Question 23, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1405 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Have all Instructors at the Training Centre now successfully completed their respective Assessors Course, if not what are their respective expected completion dates?

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

1410 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, two of our new instructors have successfully completed their assessor qualification. A further two instructors have finalised their assessor course portfolios and are currently awaiting internal quality assurance sampling and certification. Their completion is imminent, with certification projected for May 2026. Additionally, two more instructors enrolled in the assessor course on 9th December 2025. This qualification typically requires approximately 12 months to complete, although the timeframe may vary depending on factors such as the availability of apprentices for required workplace observations.

1415

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you. I am glad to hear all the progress being made there. Am I correct that May 2026 is the estimated date upon completion of the internal verification, and then it will be subject to ratification by an external verifier, which is probably beyond his control? Is that what is going to happen?

1420 **Hon. C P Santos:** Yes, that is the process, I understand

**Madam Speaker:** Next Question.

**Q24/2026  
Employment Tribunal –  
Claims filed**

1425 **Clerk:** Question 24, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can Government provide updated information in respect of the total number of claims filed with the Employment Tribunal, providing a breakdown of numbers showing at what stage those claims are at and indicating when those claims were first filed?

1430 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

**Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, the breakdown by stage of claims filed with the Employment Tribunal is as follows:

1435 Awaiting response: 16 claims, filed December 2025 and January 2026;

Mediator stage: 28 claims, filed June 2025, July 2025, August 2025, September 2025, October 2025, November 2025, December 2025 and January 2026;

1440 Chairperson stage: 15 claims, filed February 2025, May 2025, June 2025, July 2025 and September 2025;

Undergoing hearings: 38 claims, filed May 2018, July 2019, February 2020, April 2020, June 2020, December 2020, February 2022, March 2022, July 2022, August 2022, September 2022, November 2022, December 2022, February 2023, May 2023, June 2023, August 2023, November 2023, December 2023, January 2024, June 2024, September 2024, October 2024, November 2024, December 2024, March 2025 and July 2025.

1445

1450 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Madam Speaker, the Minister will recall this is information requested, sort of as a completion of what I had originally thought on the question 733 of 2025, having I will receive the dates now and so on. Can the Minister explain, despite previous sort of announcements that he was satisfied we were in a better system to do away with backlogs in the tribunals, why is there a whole year's wait? I made a note here that the appointment of a chairman is still expected for a file claimed in February 2025, and now, being the end of February 2026, that is 12 months. What has led to such a big delay for a chairman to be appointed?

1455 **Hon. C P Santos:** As you know, the case is ongoing. As the hon. Members are aware, there was a very long backlog for people awaiting chairpersons from 2019–2020, and in the past two years we have basically taken care of that backlog. We only have 15 people at the moment awaiting the appointment of a chairperson, and these are people who filed in February 2025. This means that in those 12 months, they waited for a response, they waited for the appointment of a mediator, they went through mediation, and now they are awaiting the appointment of a chairperson. So, 1460 in the past 12 months, they have gone through three out of the six stages of the employment tribunal. I think that we have been moving this quite quickly, and it is not like they are waiting for the first step of the employment tribunal for 12 months they have already moved through the process.

1465 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, I think the Minister has tried to provide sort of some explanation how that they moved on. But is the Minister satisfied that, 12 months on, the case, the grievance of an individual has not even commenced to be heard because we still do not have the appointment of a chair? How does that coincide with, you know, his previous positive sort of outlook that we were tackling this problem and expediting as quickly as possible?

1470 **Hon. C P Santos:** As I mentioned, it is very positive because before, we were waiting for chairpersons for a case six years ago. Now, we have someone awaiting for a chairperson for a case that they filed 12 months ago, that has already had some mediation. Some of these cases may have gone through mediation and then decided not to proceed. People have been heard. This is not the first piece of relationship that they have with the Employment Tribunal. We have had three different phases, so people have been through a process. I do not think anyone in that area 1475 feels ignored, especially in awaiting a chairperson.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

#### Q25/2026

#### Briefing given by the Minister for Tourism – Cruise shipping and shore excursion sector

1480 **Clerk:** Question 25, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Please provide details of the briefing given by the Minister for Tourism to the representatives of the cruise shipping and shore excursion sector as announced in Press Release 61/2026.

1485 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. Minister for Employment, Equality, Culture and Tourism.

**Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, the briefing was offered on a confidential basis ahead of the publication of the text of the UK–EU Treaty.

1490 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I must say that I find it rather odd that it was offered on a confidential basis, but, you know, the press release says that the Hon. Minister, who was very quick, as he normally is, to seek publicity on everything he does.

**Madam Speaker:** Can you get to the question as this is going on far too long.

**Hon. C P Santos:** This is coming from Mr. Cake Stall and Mr. Raffle. He is not going to tell me about my social media.

1495 **Hon. D J Bossino:** He needs to wait till I ask the question, and he said that he had briefed representatives of the local shipping and shore excursion sector. He had provided clarity ahead of Treaty implementation. He had fully informed them with the specific requirements affecting cruise calls to Gibraltar, and then he provided clarity and certainty. But I saw the photograph which he published in the press, and there were quite a number of people there. Is he honestly  
1500 saying that the confidential restrictions to which we were subject, the Leader of the Opposition and his team on this side of the House very strict restrictions, were breached by him because he told these individuals there? I mean, did they sign any documents, who subject themselves to confidentiality, or is it the case that, actually, in reality and in fact, he was only seeking publicity, and he did not really provide the detail set out in the Treaty? Is that not the case?

1505 **Hon. Chief Minister (Hon F R Picardo):** No, Madam Speaker, that is not the case. The hon. Gentleman also had his photograph taken with me. I also did not ask him to sign anything, and I briefed him confidentially. The information I gave hon. Members confidentially is part of the information, on the whole Treaty, is part of the information that the Hon. Minister also passed on confidentially to some members of the maritime industry. We also did other briefings that were  
1510 not confidential, which were completely open, but some were more confidential than others, like the one I offered them. He knows the information that we gave the individuals, by the way, because we also gave it to them. It was part of the briefing that we gave to them too

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Is it the Government's position and this can be replied and responded to by the Chief Minister or the Minister for Tourism, that, is the Government's position that the level I  
1515 am not asking him to, I wish he could have told me across the floor of the House what it is that he told me, saying that he told them on a confidential basis is the position of the Government that the information that was imparted to this particular sector of Gibraltar's economy, which is very important, set out the full detail of what is set out in the soon-to-be-entered agreements with the EU? Is that the position, so that what we have seen, as it impacts on the cruise liner industry, has  
1520 been relayed to this particular industry?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Madam Speaker, the Government does not feel that it needs to answer yes or no to questions of the sort that the hon. Gentleman has put. I have told him that aspects of the briefing given to the group that he is talking about are the same as the aspects of the briefing that we gave them on that subject.

1525 **Hon. D J Bossino:** The reason why I am exploring this is because I am quite frankly alarmed for the reasons that I mentioned earlier, and I do not need to repeat it. But the press release and the spin propagated by the Hon. Minister was that a very specific, detailed briefing was given to them, and all I am asking the Hon. Minister to say, or indeed the Chief Minister, is to expressly set out the detail or the level of detail that was imparted to them. When the Hon. Chief Minister says  
1530 "part of" or "elements of all," I am saying that those elements, I am not suggesting that the Hon. Minister briefed these individuals on the entirety of the Treaty arrangements, which are many, and many of which will be wholly irrelevant to the industry and to them, but in so far as it impacts and affects the cruise liner industry, is it the position of the Government that these individuals, without having to sign a piece of paper or, you know, confirm that they would be subject to

1535 confidentiality terms, were given the detail of what we saw in so far as it affects the cruise liner industry?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Also, in that respect, Madam Speaker, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave a few moments ago.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question.

1540

**Q26/2026**  
**Cruise liner terminal –**  
**Works to commence**

**Clerk:** Question 26, the Hon. D J Bossino.

1545 **Hon. D J Bossino:** When are the works for the cruise liner terminal expected to commence and complete?

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

1550 **Minister for Equality, Employment, Culture and Tourism (Hon. C P Santos):** Madam Speaker, an expression of interest for the development and operation of a cruise liner terminal at the Port of Gibraltar was released on the 16th of January 2026. The closing date was Friday, 20th of February 2026. Once these initial expressions of interest are reviewed and an entity is deemed suitable and successful, we will be in a better position to give expected commencement and completion dates for this project.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Is he able, it flows from the answer that the Hon. Minister has just provided, is he able to at least give an indication of how many expressions of interest have been received?

1555 **Hon. C P Santos:** I am actually picking them up this afternoon, ironically, but I am unable to. But I might post about it who knows in one of my seeking-attention and publicity posts, who knows? But that is something that we need to inform the people. That is why I put posts as opposed to standing next to a cake stall, looking pretty on a Saturday morning.

1560 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Madam Speaker, I am absolutely and utterly convinced and assured that he will post at the moment he is able to. Of that, I have absolutely no doubt. But can I ask him this: in so far as the conclusion of the works, can he at least commit to the construction and completion of the Cruise Liner Terminal to be done before the hon. Gentleman leaves office at the time of the next General Election?

1565 **Hon. C P Santos:** The plan is to do this as soon as possible. That is why we are in work in current discussions or hope to be in discussions as soon as we decide who will be the successful person after the expression of interest. So, we do not have a time limit, but we are doing it as soon as possible.

1570 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I ask him very specifically as to whether he would be doing it before this parliamentary lifetime of this Parliament. They are very keen to express, in those terms, that it is concluded. The question was asked on the basis of conclusion of works: can you at least say that at least the works will commence before the time of the next General Election?

**Hon. C P Santos:** We hope so. It is part of our manifesto, and as I said, I want to do it as soon as possible. We can discuss it further on a Saturday morning outside some raffle as well, if he wants to.

1575 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Look, this is a serious point, as you, Hon. Minister, say, and he keeps on referring to as opposed to referring to me going to cake stalls I am not sure. The reality, the reality is the reality, is the reality, is the reality, as he himself correctly mentioned, this is a manifesto commitment. We are now beyond the midterm point of this Parliament. They have got another whatever it is, depends on the Hon. Chief Minister, whoever the Chief Minister may be calls the  
1580 Election, dissolves this House. Well, we are talking about a very limited period of time, so it is either 12 months or 18 months. Is he honestly saying that he will be able to complete these works within that time period? Is he saying that it is possible that this may happen, it is, after all, a manifesto commitment, as he rightly points out?

1585 **Hon. C P Santos:** So, the hon. Member has mentioned 12 months. As far as I know, we have between 22–24. Who knows when the next Chief Minister decides to call the Election? But the intention is to start this as soon as possible. We have just received interest from an EOI; we will hopefully have discussions, and this is moving as fast as I can. I am not particularly known for moving at a snail's, glacial pace.

1590 **Madam Speaker:** Next question.

### Adjournment

1595 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Madam Speaker can I invite the House now to adjourn to tomorrow at 10 a.m.

**Madam Speaker:** I now propose the question which is if this House to now adjourn to tomorrow at 10 a.m. I now put the question which is if this House to adjourn to tomorrow at 10 a.m. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Passed  
This House will now adjourn to tomorrow at 10 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1.01 p.m.*