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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **GRA decision on complaint received by Independent candidate Mr Vasquez**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019, a formal complaint was submitted to the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority (the "Authority") by Mr Robert Vasquez, an independent candidate standing for the general election 2019. The nature of the complaint is that the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation (the "GBC") excluded Mr Vasquez *"...from programmes dealing with the issue of democracy..."* which was his *"...main campaign issue that includes dealing with corruption and cronyism."* and that this was evidence of bias, and lack of impartiality and undue prominence given to the three parties.

Having considered all the arguments submitted by the Complainant and GBC, the Authority does not agree with GBC's assessment that allowing Mr Vasquez to participate would give undue prominence to the GSD because of his former association with the same. The Authority understands GBC's reluctance to include the Complainant in a debate programme based on his candidature in the previous general election, and until recently, his support of the GSD party. However, GBC should view the Complainant as an independent candidate with his own manifesto. There would therefore be no breach of the Code if he were to be allowed to participate and the Authority finds that GBC's arguments in relation to this are flawed.

However, ultimately the question of whether he should be allowed to participate is, in the Authority's view, a matter of editorial judgment for GBC, taking the entire electoral programming schedule as a whole.

In conclusion therefore, the Authority finds that there has been no breach of the Broadcasting Act 2012 or of the Code on objectivity, impartiality, accuracy and undue prominence, but that there is nothing preventing GBC from allowing the Complainant to participate in a debate should it choose to do so.

The full decision is attached to this press release and will be available on the Authority's website.