



PRESS RELEASE

No: 456/2018

Date: 2nd August 2018

Gibraltar has Detailed Contingency Plans for All Levels of Brexit

The Government of Gibraltar has, since 2016, been preparing for all possible outcomes in relation to the departure of the United Kingdom and Gibraltar from the European Union. This is a perfectly sensible thing to do in view of the ongoing UK/EU discussions and the preparations for all eventualities announced by both sides.

On 19 July, the European Commission called on Member States and on private parties to step up preparations at all levels for all outcomes of Brexit. This followed a similar request by the European Council in June. The United Kingdom itself has also highlighted recently the preparations it is making for a no deal Brexit. It is clear that it is in nobody's interests that the UK should leave the EU without an agreement and there is a considerable amount of work going on behind the scenes in order to ensure a successful outcome.

The implications for Gibraltar of different types of Brexit were analysed in the original report that was submitted to the United Kingdom in September 2016 shortly after the overall referendum decision to leave the EU. This report covered the impact of Brexit across the public sector in Gibraltar and also on the private sector as well. Government departments and private sector organisations were consulted and contributed to the overall view that the Government presented to the United Kingdom at the time.

That analysis was made against the background of the threats being made against Gibraltar by the then Spanish Foreign Minister Mr Margallo. These ranged from the possibility of closing the border completely to making shared sovereignty a pre-condition of any future relationship between Gibraltar and the European Union. His successor Mr Dastis lowered the temperature considerably on both fronts by saying that border passage would remain as it is or better, and by removing the sovereignty pre-condition. The new Socialist Prime Minister of Spain is on record as having said that fluidity at the border is fundamental.

The operation of the land border between Gibraltar and Spain is nonetheless one of the key elements of the Government's contingency planning. That planning has looked at the worst case



scenario even though this is now highly unlikely. This has entailed planning for a no-deal Brexit, but also planning for an agreement between the United Kingdom and the European Union from which Gibraltar was excluded. However, it will be recalled that the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union David Davis guaranteed the Chief Minister that there would be no deal without Gibraltar.

There are important differences between the Gibraltar border and the Northern Ireland border. The concern in Northern Ireland, and indeed for the UK itself, is centred on the movement of goods to and from the EU. Gibraltar is not and has never been in the EU Customs Union therefore a no-deal Brexit would leave us where we are now in respect to the movement of goods. In relation to the movement of persons, the default position would be the Schengen Border Code. This is the Code in force today. The only issue in future would be the manner in which the EU and Spain would seek to operate the Code after our EU-exit. It is important to make the point that the existing framework for goods or persons would therefore not change.

The Government has nonetheless taken concrete steps to ensure the continuity of supplies into and out of Gibraltar. It is not possible to be more specific at this stage.

There have been detailed discussions with the Ministry of Defence and the private sector, as has happened in the United Kingdom itself, in order to establish the resources in terms of assets, land and people that would be available in the context of a hard Brexit. An interdepartmental working group composed of eleven officials met with the MOD and with over twenty private sector entities and organisations in Gibraltar at the end of 2017 and produced a second report which identified areas of concern and put forward solutions.

This led to detailed preparations in order to face any possible challenges posed by our departure from the European Union. Those preparations are now at a very advanced stage and indeed may be activated anyway whether or not there is a difficult Brexit.

The Gibraltar and UK Governments met here last week in a meeting chaired by the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia, who is the Minister with responsibility for Brexit. That meeting took place in order to review the areas of contingency planning in each country so that all sides are aware of the plans and preparations that are under discussion. There will be regular meetings going forward at official level.

"The Government does not envisage any need to stock pile food, as has been suggested in the United Kingdom. Precautions will be taken in respect of medicines sourced from UK to ensure there are no glitches in supply or unnecessary costs arising from emergency airfreighting, if these can be avoided," said Dr Garcia.