



PRESS RELEASE

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Gibraltar will not cede an inch on sovereignty Deputy Chief Minister tells MPs

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has told the visiting cross-party group of UK parliamentarians that Gibraltar will not cede an inch of our sovereignty, jurisdiction and control. He addressed directly the recent press reports about Gibraltar Airport at an official dinner hosted by the Government for the group of MPs.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that it was important to understand that this was about more than just actual sovereignty. “The symbols and the ingredients of power are just as important. You cannot separate one from the other, particularly against the background of a continuing territorial claim by Spain. In other words, it is a contradiction in terms to put sovereignty to one side and then seek to advance the symbols of sovereignty in the same breath.”

He made clear that the red lines of the Gibraltar Government and of the Spanish Government are well known. However, he argued that there was space between those sets of red lines to seek positive cooperation with practical, modern solutions which do not cross any of them.

The cross-party group comprised Conservative Robert Goodwill MP, Labour Shadow Foreign Minister Liz McInnes MP, Liberal Democrat Brexit Spokesman Tom Brake MP, Labour Foreign Affairs Committee Member Mike Gapes MP and DUP Northern Ireland Assembly Member William Humphreys MLA.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the Gibraltar Government remains ready to engage with Spain, as our next door neighbour, in a positive and constructive manner as we prepare to leave the European Union. He said that there was already a degree of shared prosperity between Gibraltar and the neighbouring region of Spain, pointing to 13,000 frontier workers, the £ 90 million a year spent by Gibraltar residents in Spain and the £ 400 million a year purchased from Spanish companies by Gibraltar businesses. There was scope for even greater shared prosperity through a fluid border which was in everybody’s interests. He made the point that this fluidity should be extended to residents and to citizens in general, not only to workers.



Dr Garcia urged the MPs to ensure that the position of Gibraltar was protected as we leave the European Union. He said that Gibraltar has been British for more than 300 years, which is longer than the United States, Germany or Italy have existed. “In that time, we have come of age under the broad umbrella of British values, traditions and way of life. There are some lessons that we have learnt extremely well. One such lesson is never to give in to bullies. And you can rest assured that we never will.”

In response on behalf of the guests, Labour MP Mike Gapes thanked the Government for the organisation of the visit to Gibraltar and made it clear that the group had well understood the concerns that had been expressed, which they would now take back to Westminster. He reiterated the cross-party support for Gibraltar that existed in the United Kingdom.

Note to Editors

The full text of the Deputy Chief Minister’s speech is attached.