



Deputy Chief Minister

## PRESS RELEASE

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### DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER OPENS THE BRIGHTMED TALKS

Students from Bayside, Westside and Prior Park today packed the Ince's Hall for a day of BrightMed talks.

The Deputy Chief Minister, Dr Joseph Garcia, welcomed both the speakers and the audience to an event planned to help young people to understand and develop the key skills they need in the future. The theme of the day was 'Borders.'

In his address, Dr Garcia stressed that, although the world is criss-crossed with many physical frontiers, there were also invisible borders created between people and races. He pointed out that environment problems, such as marine pollution and air pollution, do not recognise any frontiers and need no passport or identity card to spread around the world. Similarly, the internet is able to cross international borders without any hindrance.

Dr Garcia described the time that the Spanish Government closed the frontier between Gibraltar's and Spain. "I remember as a child being driven around the border area when it was closed. Families on this side shouted news to relatives on the other. Babies and small children were held up in the air for those relatives to see. There was no internet then: No Facebook, no Twitter, no Messenger, no mobile phones. There were no telephone links either – those too were cut off. That traumatic experience was an act of inhumanity."

Finally, he stressed that Gibraltar is a melting pot of people whose ancestors were able to cross borders in order to live in our community, a community in which people from a mixture of different religions, cultures and traditions are proud to live together in harmony.