



**GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
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PRESS RELEASE

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**COMMUNIQUE OF THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE FORUM OF
DIALOGUE ON GIBRALTAR**

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mr David Miliband, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain, Sr. Miguel Angel Moratinos and the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Mr Peter Caruana ("the participants") held the second Ministerial meeting of the Forum of Dialogue on Gibraltar in London today. The meeting took place in a cordial and constructive atmosphere.

Since the last Ministerial meeting held in Cordoba, Spain on 18th September 2006 there have been three rounds of discussions in the Forum. These meetings have reviewed implementation of the arrangements agreed in Cordoba, and have also considered and developed working papers for the future agenda of the Forum.

We reviewed progress in the implementation of the Cordoba Statements. On pensions, we welcomed the United Kingdom's payment of the second tranche of the lump sum to Affected Spanish Pensioners in April 2008, thereby meeting the UK's obligations under the Ministerial Statement on Pensions. On the airport, we noted Gibraltar's announcement that the tender for construction of the new air terminal has been awarded with construction work to begin in October 2008. We confirmed our commitment to ensure that fluidity improvements at the fence / frontier are maintained, in spite of an increase in car traffic in both directions of more than 25% since the Cordoba Statements. We also noted and welcomed the important reinforcement of Spanish police manpower. We welcomed the implementation of the Cordoba arrangements on telecommunications. As regards the Instituto Cervantes, we

are pleased to announce that the Government of Gibraltar has made available suitable premises. We look forward to the Institute starting its activities in the near future. We confirmed our commitment to concluding all aspects of the implementation of the Cordoba Statements.

Looking ahead, we want to further create a constructive atmosphere of mutual confidence and cooperation for the benefit and prosperity of Gibraltar and the whole region, in particular the Campo de Gibraltar, and ensure that cooperation and mutual trust become the norm. To this end, we endorse the broad objectives of the future agenda, which will encompass co-operation on the environment, financial services and taxation, judicial, customs and police co-operation, education, maritime communications and visa-related issues with a view to reaching agreements, where possible, at future Ministerial meetings of the Forum. We have re-affirmed that, as was the case with the Cordoba Statements, any agreements in these areas would have no implications whatsoever regarding sovereignty and jurisdiction. In addition, any such agreements would have to be compatible with any EU instruments' and international conventions' obligations binding on the participants.

Co-operation on the environment

The environment is shared by all in Gibraltar and the whole region, in particular the Campo de Gibraltar, and –by its very nature- does not respect boundaries. We are determined that there must therefore be co-operation to reach a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. We agree that there will be co-operation with the aim of agreeing specific measures, arrangements and protocols to address the problems and threats to the shared environment.

Maritime communications

We encourage and agree to facilitate that establishment of commercial maritime links between the Port of Gibraltar and Ports in Spain, especially in the Bay, should there be commercial interest in establishing these links. We discussed the New Flame incident. In this context, we are determined to enhance comprehensive co-operation between the Ports. We reaffirmed that comprehensive co-operation on maritime safety and environment issues constitutes an important part of the agreed future agenda of the Forum.

Judicial, customs and police co-operation

Crime increasingly takes place across boundaries, so the fight against crime must do so too. We are determined to develop effective co-operation in the fight against crime, including all types of organised crime and illegal immigration, both at police and customs, and judicial levels. We are therefore committed to ensuring as close cooperation as possible, and that a thorough review of all aspects of such co-operation and an examination of ways to improve it, including exchange of information and operational co-operation and communications will be carried out.

Financial Services and Taxation

We recognise the value to all of us of international financial services, carried out in a well regulated context, and which are compliant effectively with all applicable EU and other international measures relating to money laundering, terrorist and other serious crime financing. To this end, we are determined that there will be the normal degree of co-operation, including arrangements, mechanisms and regular contacts at all levels, in relation to financial services policy, regulation and supervision, taxation, exchange of information and anti-money laundering issues.

Visa related Issues

The fact that Spain belongs to the Schengen area, while the United Kingdom (and thus Gibraltar) does not take part in some aspects of that acquis, in particular regarding crossing of borders, requires certain controls of the transit of persons to and from Gibraltar at the fence / frontier. Nevertheless we recognise the special problems faced by non-EU nationals resident in Gibraltar. We will seek viable solutions to these problems.

Education

We recognise that bilingualism in languages such as English and Spanish, which together cover a large proportion of the planet, represents a significant social and economic opportunity for citizens of Gibraltar and the whole region, in particular the Campo de Gibraltar, who are particularly well placed to achieve such bilingualism. Education also has an important role to play in the enhancement and appreciation of culture and in the fostering of understanding. Accordingly, we will seek to enhance educational co-operation at all levels. The early establishment of the Instituto Cervantes in Gibraltar will contribute to the achievement of these objectives.

The Forum, since its meeting in Gibraltar in March 2007, has been developing working papers setting out detailed objectives in relation to these new agenda issues. Accordingly, we have agreed that the Forum will meet in September to finalise the specific objectives for each of these areas and the methodologies for achieving them. The Forum will meet at Ministerial level to reach agreements within the next twelve months.