



**GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
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PRESS RELEASE

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The Government is delighted with the recent Trilateral Forum Ministerial Meeting in Gibraltar.

It is now necessary to focus on converting the agreed areas of co-operation into specific cross border co-operation agreements. The three ministers decided that agreements should be reached immediately on a number of matters, and by the New Year (preferably) or by next summer (at the latest) in the rest of the areas. The Gibraltar Government will get down to work on this straight away.

In the run-up to the meeting, the Chief Minister said that language had to be agreed which neutralised any possible gain by Spain in the context of Maritime co-operation arising from her designation of our waters in the EU. The Chief Minister explained this to mean that there had to be recognition by Spain that her designation of a Site of Community importance in our waters, and the Commission's decision relating thereto had changed nothing in Spain's favour, and that she had gained nothing by that designation or by the Decision.

This is exactly what was achieved in the agreed texts in which Spain agreed that such designations "have no implications for, and thus do not change the sovereignty, jurisdiction and control of waters to which they relate, which accordingly remain as they had been before."

Despite selective, incomplete or even false references to this agreed language by opposition politicians seeking to tarnish the success of the meeting, this language achieves in full every aspect of what the Government had said it wanted, in order to be able to proceed with co-operation.

Spain has acknowledged that her designation has changed nothing and that the position in relation to Sovereignty, jurisdiction and control of the waters after her designation, and the Commission's decision, remains exactly the same as it was before the designation and the decision. That is complete neutralisation of the effect of the designation and the decision in so far as concerns Sovereignty, jurisdiction and control of the waters.

Of course, the Government's legal case to annul the Decision remains; UK/Gibraltar's position on the sovereignty of waters remains. And Spain's position on the Sovereignty of the waters also remains. It is not serious for anyone to think that Spain could agree to drop her Sovereignty claim as a pre-condition to co-operation. That is not what the Government sought from Spain, anymore than the Government would be willing to compromise our position on Sovereignty for the sake of co-operation.

A spokesman for No 6 said:-

"It is regrettable that political commentators who feel obliged to criticise the Government come what may, do not stick to facts and truth to do so. Another example is the statement that the Government has agreed to resolve the Spanish workers claim. This is complete fabrication.

The Government believes that Gibraltar should be proud of its organisation of the Meeting. The venue was superb, the political outcome was successful for Gibraltar and the performance of many people in Gibraltar who contributed to the success of this complex organisation was excellent.

The Chief Minister has written to M H Bland Ltd, thanking them for the loan of the excellent venue, to GJBS for rapid and expert building modification works, and to the RGP for their professional and impressive performance in expertly policing all aspects of the day.

And finally, the Government repeats its appreciation to the Spanish Government, and in particular to Sr Moratinos, for agreeing you come to Gibraltar for the meeting in the knowledge that it would be used politically against them in Spain. Reciprocity of respect and co-operation, and political boldness that respects the freely expressed wishes of Gibraltar, is the only democratically viable way forward.