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'Bilateralism is dead' says Chief Minister

The remarks by the Spanish Ambassador to London, Federico Trillo, referring to "bilateral" relations with the United Kingdom cannot be a reference to any discussions, conversations, process or other contact between Spain and the UK in respect of Gibraltar. This is the second time that Sñr Trillo has made such an erroneous reference in as many months, as if repeating a position, however incorrect, might help to establish it as fact.

As Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar stated the last time Mr Trillo made similar, erroneous, remarks, the position of the UK, a policy restated repeatedly by the Foreign Secretary and the Minister for Europe and even by the Prime Minister himself, is that "there's no change in the (British) Government's position. It's for the people of Gibraltar themselves to determine their future and we wouldn't engage in any discussion about Gibraltar that the Gibraltarians didn't want us to engage in and I think that's important to understand."

In fact, Gibraltar remains entirely united against any bilateral engagement between the UK and Spain over Gibraltar and there is therefore no prospect of any bilateral relations between the UK and Spain in respect of any matter relating to Gibraltar.

The indisputable position going forward is that bilateralism between UK and Spain is dead and will never ever be revived under any circumstances.

Both Spanish ministers and their diplomatic corps need to understand that in order to avoid wasting further effort.

As the Government emphasised on the last occasion that Mr Trillo made similar remarks, Mr Picardo has frequently and categorically stated that Gibraltar continues to support the trilateral process and cannot subscribe to any other form of dialogue with the Spanish state.

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar believes the Tripartate Forum provides an adequate framework to resolve matters of mutual interest to the citizens on both sides of the border. This policy is totally in line with the policy of the British Government as also stated on numerous occasions and communicated to the Spanish Foreign Minister by The Rt Hon Mr Hague.

There is therefore no change in the policies of either the UK or Gibraltar on the matter and the Spanish Government, media and, presumably, Spanish diplomats must be fully aware of this.

If they are not, the Government will assist them in their recollection by pointing out the reality of the position every time they need to be reminded.