



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
PRESS OFFICE
No.6 Convent Place
Gibraltar
Tel:20070071; Fax: 20043057**

PRESS RELEASE

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Government raise waters, queues, gaming and aviation issues in Brussels

The Chief Minister, Fabian Picardo, and the Deputy Chief Minister, Dr Joseph Garcia, have continued with a hectic schedule of meetings and engagements in Brussels in order to put across the Gibraltar point of view to decision-makers in the EU capital.

This evening, the Chief Minister will address the Edelman Institute on the subject of Gibraltar in the European Union.

Earlier, Mr Picardo attended a number of meetings on on-line gaming accompanied by Gibraltar UK Representative, Albert Poggio and members of the industry. This included a meeting with German Liberal, MEP Jurgen Creutzmann, who is the Shadow Rapporteur for the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Group (ALDE) in the European Parliament on on-line gaming. It follows a meeting with the Parliament's Rapporteur, Conservative MEP Ashley Fox, yesterday.

Mr Picardo also met with the European Commission directorate for the Internal Market and again raised matters of interest to the on-line gaming industry and to Gibraltar as a whole.

The Chief Minister then hosted a lunch at the Gibraltar office for the United Kingdom representation in Brussels UKREP.

The Deputy Chief Minister meanwhile attended separate meetings with Chief Secretary Ernest Gomez and the Government's Chief Legal Adviser Michael Llamas.

The first of these was with the European Citizens Action Service (ECAS) which centred on the frontier delays. A full dossier of photographs, statistics and press cuttings was presented to ECAS to serve as evidence of the unacceptable delays generated by Spain at its border with Gibraltar. This will be progressed further.

Dr Garcia then met with the Environment directorate of the European Commission and explained the position of the Government in relation to the designation of the site "Estrecho Oriental", at the request of Spain, overlapping the existing UK site "Southern waters of Gibraltar". The question of fishing in Gibraltar waters was also outlined to the Commission, in the context of the Nature Protection Act and the expert report.

This was followed by a meeting on civil aviation matters with the European Commission where the Government stressed the importance of not allowing the Spanish Government to turn the clock back through the introduction of the Gibraltar exclusion clause in such legislative measures.

The Deputy Chief Minister then raised the Parent Subsidiary Directive and the Code of Conduct on business taxation with the Chair of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, Sharon Bowles MEP, and Sir Graham Watson MEP. This was followed by a courtesy call on the former Prime Minister of Belgium, Guy Verhofstadt MEP, who is the leader of the ALDE group, the third largest grouping of MEPs in the European Parliament and who succeeded Sir Graham in this post.