



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
Office of the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs,
Public Transport and the Port
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Gibraltar

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INTERNET SHOPPING SEMINAR

The Business Support Unit, under the auspices of the Ministry for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port, held its third workshop on the 25th April 2013 on 'Internet Shopping and its effects on the local economy'. The seminar was well attended by retailers, the Gibraltar Chamber of Commerce, the Gibraltar Federation of Small Businesses, the Department of Consumer Affairs, represented by Mrs Maruchi Risso, Gibtelecom represented by Chief Executive Officer Tim Bristow and other affected parties interested in analysing and discussing the effects of on-line sales on brick and mortar businesses. The discussion was opened by Mr Craig Sacarello of the GFSB, followed by a second presentation by Mr Edward Macquisten of the Chamber.

During Craig Sacarello's presentation on the proposals and recommendations of the GFSB, issues such as the importance of good customer service, security and the need for the provision of a great shopping experience were discussed as a means of making local shopping more attractive to the general public. Commenting on the seminar, Mr Sacarello said: "Online sales are here to stay and are likely to grow. The GFSB would rather focus on enhancing the strengths of local retailers rather than setting up trade barriers. We also are engaging with HM Government of Gibraltar to ensure that it assists in providing a level playing field and backs any initiatives or studies, which will impact positively on the local bricks and mortars retail sector."

Mr Sacarello's presentation was followed by Edward Macquisten's who presented the ideas of the Chamber. Mr Macquisten provided statistics proving how online sales are increasing dramatically worldwide and the impact which money spent outside Gibraltar has on Gibraltar's economy. Commenting on the matter, Mr Macquisten said: "The internet genie is well and truly out of the bottle and we cannot go back. The challenge for local businesses and particularly those in retail, is to look at how Gibraltar can exploit it to their advantage and make Gibraltar an even more unique and enjoyable shopping destination. The Chamber welcomes forums such as these to exchange useful suggestions and ideas."

Commenting on the seminar, the Minister for Tourism, Commercial Affairs, Public Transport and the Port, the Hon Neil Costa MP said: "I was very pleased with the attendance and with the wide-ranging discussions that will definitely prove to be extremely productive and advantageous. During our first collective stab on this important business issue, we have already managed to analyse the extent to which internet shopping is affecting Gibraltar's economy and have also touched upon several measures in order to establish and ensure a level playing field. The next Business Support Unit discussion will be on the 4th July 2012 9:30am at the Finance Centre Boardroom Suite 761 Europort, and the purpose will be to flesh out the various recommendations discussed as a means to meet the challenges posed by online sales to brick and mortar retailers'.