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PRESS RELEASE

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HMGoG WARMLY WELCOMES UNEQUIVOCAL HAGUE SUPPORT

HMGoG : UK HAS NOT AGREED BILATERAL OR QUADRILATERAL

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar warmly welcomes the statement of staunch support from Foreign Secretary William Hague today on his arrival in Brussels about the determination of the United Kingdom to stand with the people of Gibraltar at this time of disproportionate and politically motivated controls at Gibraltar frontier.

HMGoG has also noted the statement by Mr Margallo today at his press conference after the EU Foreign Ministers meeting in Brussels today.

At one stage in the press conference Mr Margallo says that he wrote to the British Foreign Secretary at the beginning of last year proposing bilateral and/or quadrilateral talks to replace the Trilateral Forum. Mr Margallo goes on to say that Mr Hague replied by letter of the 14th April 2012 and agreed to the bilateral / quadrilateral formula he had proposed.

The Government of Gibraltar was involved in the preparation of the Foreign Secretary's reply of 14th April 2012 to Mr Margallo. We have a copy of the letter as sent.

The letter DOES NOT accept Mr Margallo's proposal to move to bilateral or quadrilateral talks, as Mr Margallo has appeared to suggest in his press conference in Brussels a few moments ago. In fact, it does the opposite.

The Foreign Secretary specifically sets out in the letter the UK's continued strong commitment to the Trilateral Forum. Mr Hague specifically sets out that, having discussed the matter with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, the Hon Fabian Picardo MP, they agreed the need to continue engagement in constructive and collaborative dialogue. As a result, Mr Hague proposed an alternative to bilateral, trilateral and quadrilateral talks. These are the "ad hoc" meetings which the Foreign Secretary and the Chief Minister have referred to since then.

Mr Margallo's statements today must be seen in light of those facts. The position of the Foreign Secretary is clear, unequivocal and black upon white in his letter.

Ends