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De Vigo Manipulates Figures

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar notes statements attributed to Spanish Secretary of State for the EU, Sñr Iñigo Mendez de Vigo made yesterday in Ceuta.

Sñr de Vigo is reported to have called on UK to force Gibraltar to change its tobacco legislation in light of recent EU Commission recommendations. As Sñr de Vigo should be aware, Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar has full constitutional competences to deal with issues related to tobacco. Moreover, the Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo already said on the same day of the announcement by the EU Commission that Gibraltar was already planning to take a number of further steps to curtail illicit tobacco activity in keeping and beyond the EU Commission's recommendations.

For Sñr de Vigo to have ignored this in his remarks demonstrates that his statements were designed as usual only to try to denigrate Gibraltar.

What Sñr de Vigo needs to do is explain to the Spanish public why his government has refused to publish the letter addressed to them by the EU Commission which sets out the recommendations which Spain has been asked to implement to improve frontier fluidity in the next six months. In the interest of full transparency Gibraltar published the letter from the EU Commission relating to recommendations made for HM Government of Gibraltar to take action on the very day it was received. Spain has as yet failed to do likewise.

Finally Sñr de Vigo should also stop crudely manipulating statistics. His reference to tobacco volumes sold in Gibraltar being equivalent to 180 cigarettes smoked by each Gibraltar resident each day is pejoratively designed to give a negative and false impression of Gibraltar. In fact, on his own figures, volumes are equivalent also to less than one carton of cigarettes sold per tourist that comes to Gibraltar. Sñr de Vigo has preferred to interpret the statistic in the most negative and statistically absurd way possible for his own transparent political purposes.