



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
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JMC meetings were very useful for Gibraltar

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has said that the meeting of the Joint Ministerial Council in London this week has proved to be a very useful forum for Gibraltar. It has provided a framework for exchanging views with the United Kingdom and with the Governments of the different Overseas Territories.

In addition to this, Dr Garcia and Dr Cortes took advantage of their presence in London yesterday to attend the House of Commons Chamber for Prime Minister's questions, which included a question on Gibraltar, and for the debate on Gibraltar which followed the Urgent Question. They were later able to personally thank some of the MPs who had supported Gibraltar during the debate including the Chairman of the All Party Group on the Overseas Territories Andrew Rosindell MP.

During the conference itself, Dr Cortes contributed to the discussions on Health and on the Environment both during the conference sessions and in a private meeting with members of the Environmental Audit Committee of the House of Commons. The session included representatives from the UK Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and other relevant entities.

Dr Cortes explained the challenges facing the environment in Gibraltar both on land and at sea. He also went into the policies of the Government on the environment and raised the questions of points of contact, fishing in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters and attendance at meetings following from international conventions. It was also very relevant to listen to the challenges facing other Overseas Territories and to learn from their proposed solutions.

Earlier, Dr Garcia contributed to the discussions on employment and vocational education. The United Kingdom Government explained that they had similar employment schemes to those implemented by the Government of Gibraltar. The Deputy Chief Minister also contributed to the discussions on the European Union and the Overseas Territories, Renewable Energy and International Financial Services Regulation.

A number of UK Government Ministers attended these sessions including the Exchequer Secretary David Gauke MP, the Minister for Energy and Climate Change Greg Barker MP and Overseas Territories Minister Mark Simmonds MP who chaired the meetings. In the closing reception at the Foreign Office Mr Simmonds once again reiterated the UK Government's commitment to the Overseas Territories and singled out support for Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands first.