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<b>PRESS RELEASE</b>
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**PICARDO MEETS PSOE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE MEMBERS  
& LA LINEA MAYOR GEMMA ARAUJO**

The Chief Minister, the Hon F Picardo, MP, held a meeting in Spain this afternoon with senior members of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) at the invitation of La Linea Mayor, Gemma Araujo.

The PSOE delegation was composed of (i) Gaspar Zarrias (Federal Executive member and Member of Parliament in Madrid with responsibility for Municipal Policy); (ii) Juan Moscoso (Federal Executive member and Member of Parliament in Madrid and PSOE spokesperson on the Foreign Affairs Committee); (iii) Irene Garcia (Secretary General of the PSOE in Cadiz); and (iv) Francisco Cornejo (Regional Municipal Policy). They were accompanied by Ms Araujo who had convened the members of Federal Executive and other senior PSOE figures to visit La Linea today to take part in the Ayuntamiento's "Gibraltar Committee" sessions held earlier in the day. That earlier meeting had been held to discuss the most recent developments at the frontier and the implications of the restrictions imposed by the Partido Popular Government in Madrid for Spanish workers on the Rock and for businesses in La Linea and the Campo.

The meeting was held in a convivial and fraternal atmosphere and was an opportunity to continue the links that had already been developed between Mr Picardo and the senior members of the PSOE in attendance.

At the meeting with the PSOE leaders and Mr Picardo, Ms Araujo outlined her concerns in respect of the effect that the present frontier restrictions are having on La Linea. These were shared by the members of the PSOE from Madrid and Cadiz who were in attendance and who had heard these concerns outlined at their earlier meeting in La Linea. They reflected the views of all sectors and collectives in La Linea in the later meeting with Mr Picardo, including those of La Linea fishermen.

All those present confirmed their view of dialogue as the way forward (whether under the Trilateral or Ad Hoc formula) to foster progress in good neighbourly relations and to exploit mutually beneficial economic activity in the future, as well as the methodology for resolving any matters in dispute between Gibraltar and Spain, apart from the issue of sovereignty.

Mr Picardo explained his Government's strong commitment to dialogue under both the Tripartite Forum and the Ad Hoc Formula proposed by Foreign Secretary William Hague which Gibraltar has supported from the moment it was proposed. Mr Picardo also expressed his Government's willingness to find real ways of co-operating with La Linea and the Campo Area not just to resolve disputes but also to create employment and economic activity for the benefit of people in the area. Mr Picardo took the opportunity to outline the reasoning behind the recent Parliamentary amendment to the Nature Protection Act, and how the work behind that had originated in the continued dialogue with Ms Araujo.

Mr Picardo said: *"I was very pleased to be able to meet senior members of the PSOE in Spain today. I have known Mr Moscoso, Mr Zarrias and Ms Garcia for some time now and I was very supportive of Ms Araujo's work to bring them to the region to hear the concerns of the people of La Linea directly. I was also delighted to meet Mr Cornejo. The attitude of the senior PSOE members I met was to confirm that they felt, as we do in the GSLP/Liberals, that dialogue is the only way forward, to promote good neighbourly relations, mutual understanding and policies designed to deliver mutual economic benefit for people on both sides of the frontier. La Linea and Gibraltar have an almost symbiotic relationship and Gemma Araujo and the PSOE have rightly promoted dialogue as the way forward, an attitude that we have welcomed and echoed."*