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Government urges people to exercise their right to vote

The Government hopes that the people of Gibraltar will exercise their right to vote in elections to the European Parliament. Polling day is on Thursday 22 May.

It will be recalled that winning the right to vote in European Parliamentary elections was the result of a long political struggle followed by a lengthy legal battle. This culminated in the enfranchisement of Gibraltar through our inclusion in the South West of England constituency.

The method of voting in European elections is different to that used in elections to the Gibraltar Parliament. In European elections each elector has only one vote which they exercise by placing an "X" next to the party list that they support. This means that there is one vote for a single party list which includes all the party's candidates.

The main difference with Gibraltar elections, therefore, is the electors will have one vote. Voting by post and by proxy is also allowed. In European elections, nationals of other EU Member States who live in Gibraltar and Qualifying Commonwealth Citizens in the Register can also vote.

'It was a long and difficult struggle for Gibraltar to win our right to vote through a legal challenge known as the Matthews case,' said the Chief Minister Hon Fabian Picardo. 'Now that we have that right we should exercise it and not take it for granted. The Government therefore urges everyone to go out and use their vote on Thursday 22nd May. Our future is in Europe and we must take every opportunity that comes our way in order to shape and influence that future.'

Commenting on the coming European elections, the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia added:

"In European elections, voters do not choose a Government. They choose individuals who belong to political parties to represent them in Brussels and Strasbourg. Gibraltar has a very real interest in the outcome of the European elections and we must remain engaged. In the last few months, several groups have travelled to Brussels to put across their views to the EU institutions. Now, here is a chance for everyone in Gibraltar to have their voices heard and to have a real impact on the outcome of this election."