



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
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Government calls for action after EU Commission visit

The Government welcomes the second visit by European Commission officials to the land frontier between Gibraltar and Spain.

This visit follows on from the first inspection on 25 September 2013 and the report of 15 November and it is a consequence of the lengthy delays being experienced by pedestrians and vehicles crossing the border.

These delays have come about as a result of the unlawful and disproportionate checks being conducted by the Spanish authorities at their whim.

The Commission inspectors were able to witness at first hand the way in which the Gibraltar Government has complied with the implementation of the recommendations made to Gibraltar. This has included infrastructural, administrative and proposed legislative changes. The most visible of the first are the additional lanes to enter Gibraltar, the barriers on each lane for vehicles exiting Gibraltar and the construction of a car search facility that can be used for both incoming and outgoing traffic.

The members of the inspection team were given a tour of the frontier area and were able to see the infrastructure for themselves. They were then given a number of briefings by Government officials including Michael Llamas, the Chief Legal Adviser, the Commissioner of Police Eddie Yome, the Collector of Customs John Rodriguez, the Head Statistician Claire Kelly and the Principal Secretary to the Deputy Chief Minister Caine Sanchez. The Chief Secretary to the Government Ernest Gomez was also in attendance.

A number of pressure groups and NGOs then met with the Commission inspectors in order to put across their point of view.

Commenting on the visit, the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia said:

“The European Commission has come to look at the progress in the implementation of the recommendations that were made to Gibraltar and Spain on 15 November. The reality is that in Gibraltar they have found more than just progress and the inspectors have seen that we have completed the works required whilst Spain has not even started. It is to be expected that the Commission takes note of this. Our understanding is that they will go to the Spanish side of the frontier and then go back to Brussels where they will produce another report into what they have seen.

There are a number of measures that the Commission could take culminating in opening infraction proceedings against Spain. They could also deploy a permanent monitor to the border for a fixed period of time. We would very much welcome this. We have nothing to hide.

It was to be expected that there was no frontier queue while the Minister for Europe was in Gibraltar yesterday and that there was no queue while the Commission inspectors were in Gibraltar today. Once they have left the area, the Spanish frontier authorities will then continue with their flagrant violation of the right to freedom of movement of EU nationals through an internal border of the European Union.

The Government will continue to send the Commission statistical data, photographs and other evidence of the unlawful and disproportionate controls being exercised by Spain at its frontier with Gibraltar. We will continue to take the issue to the EU in order to keep it alive.”

