



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER
No 6 Convent Place
Gibraltar**

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Garcia urges MEPs to be vigilant of Gibraltar's interests

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has told MEPs in Brussels that they need to be vigilant of Gibraltar's interests in the European Union given the continuing campaign by Spain to undermine our position. The new MEPs, who were elected in May, formally took office on 1 July and the Government's initiative is designed to put across the Gibraltar point of view as early as possible in the Parliamentary term.

Dr Garcia was accompanied in these meetings by the Government's Chief Legal Adviser Michael Llamas QC, Principal Secretary Caine Sanchez, who leads on the Frontier Monitoring Project and PA Ernest Francis.

It is worth recalling that some of the MEPs who represent Gibraltar are new to the Parliament and to the detail of Gibraltar issues. The first few weeks have been spent in discussions between the Parliamentary groups about the allocation of Committee Chairs and the composition of the Committees of the Parliament.

Dr Garcia used the second day of the Government's visit to Brussels to update Members of the European Parliament on the latest developments relating to Gibraltar and the EU. This included the continuing delays at the border as well as the recent visit by the EU Commission, the attempts by Spain to exclude Gibraltar from EU civil aviation legislation and environmental matters were also discussed.

The Gibraltar delegation first met with Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat Members of the European Parliament. This included Conservative MEP Ashley Fox, who is already well acquainted with Gibraltar issues and who has dealt with on-line gaming and other matters in the past.

Dr Garcia also took the opportunity to meet newly elected Labour MEP Claire Moody, who was also very keen to assist Gibraltar.

The Government delegation also raised Gibraltar with Liberal Democrat MEP Catherine Bearder, who sits on the Environment Committee. The Deputy Chief Minister discussed the various concerns that Gibraltar has in relation to environmental matters, particularly the failure of Spain to stop the sewage pollution into Western Beach.

The Gibraltar delegation will also meet with other parties and groups who have been supportive of Gibraltar in the past.

The Deputy Chief Minister also met with and personally congratulated Sir Graham Watson on the award to him by Parliament of the Freedom of the City of Gibraltar last week.