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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Meeting with Minister for Europe and UK Overseas Territories Association (UKOTA)**

The Chief Minister, Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP and the Deputy Chief Minister Hon Dr Joseph Garcia MP, this afternoon met with the Minister for Europe with responsibility for Gibraltar, Rt Hon David Lidington MP, at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

A number of relevant and topical issues were discussed between Mr Picardo and Mr Lidington including the latest on the border delays, the Spanish frontier works and the continuing incursions into British Gibraltar Territorial Waters by Spanish state vessels. The meeting continues the very positive engagement between the Gibraltar and UK Governments on matters of mutual interest.

The meeting with Mr Lidington was preceded by a meeting of the Political Council of the UK Overseas Territories Association (UKOTA) which took up most of the morning. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Association.

Gibraltar holds the rotating presidency of UKOTA which means that the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo chaired the proceedings as the President of the Association.

The meeting, which was attended by about fifty delegates, comprised representatives of Anguilla, Ascension, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St Helena, Tristan Da Cunha and Turks and Caicos. This meeting served to coordinate views between the Overseas Territories Government's and to prepare the ground for the meeting with UK Ministers.

The Chief Minister said: "David Lidington has been a good friend of Gibraltar for many years. He is the longest serving Minister for Europe. In his time there have been areas where we have been able to make huge progress, in particular on areas related to the environment and free movement in respect of which the EU Commission has made important findings in our favour. Although we all want to make even more progress in some other problem areas, the failure to resolve matters has not been for want of David Lidington's support. Our meeting was as positive as all our encounters have been and sets the agenda for the work we need to do in coming months in the remaining areas of mutual concern."

Mr Picardo and Dr Garcia are in London for meetings of the Joint Ministerial Council between the United Kingdom Government and political leaders from the UK Overseas Territories.

The Joint Ministerial Council between the OT Governments and the United Kingdom formally opens tomorrow Tuesday.