

PRESS RELEASE

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Gibraltar opens new office in Brussels

The Gibraltar Government office in Brussels was officially opened by the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo yesterday evening in the presence of the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia and Attorney General Michael Llamas. The Chief Minister was introduced by Sir Graham Watson.

The five storey building, which cost 1.3 million euros, is a typical Brussels house in a central square of the EU capital which is close to the European Commission and to the United Kingdom representation UKREP. It comprises three floors of office space and two floors of residential space. One of the flats in the building is occupied by Legal Officer Daniel D'Amato who has been seconded to Brussels by the Government's European Union and International Department (EUID). The Government considers that the purchase represents excellent value for money and a great investment in bricks and mortar terms alone.

The opening of Gibraltar House in Brussels was attended by a wide cross-section of EU political society. This included several Ambassadors of EU countries to the European Union as well as the heads of regional offices of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and Catalan Governments. There were also a large number of Members of the European Parliament present from across the political spectrum and from different countries. This included Conservative, Labour, Liberal, Green and UKIP MEPs. There were many Brussels-based journalists present and representatives of important think-tanks.

The high-powered attendance reflects the lobbying work which has been carried out by the Government in the EU capital ever since it came into office in December 2011 and indeed even before then. This point was made by the Chief Minister in his address when he referred to his first visit to Brussels with Dr Garcia some twenty years ago one as a young law student and the other as historian who had just written the modern political history of Gibraltar. They had now returned to Brussels to open an office there together with Attorney General Michael Llamas.

The activities of Gibraltar House in Brussels will be directed and guided by Sir Graham Watson who has been instrumental in everything that has happened so far. It will be manned by four members of staff.