



Deputy Chief Minister

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Security of British citizens in British waters must be guaranteed, says Garcia**

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has declared that the UK Government must guarantee the safety and security of British citizens in the British waters around Gibraltar. He said that whatever was being done diplomatically was clearly not enough because Spain continued to make a mockery of British sovereignty in the waters around Gibraltar.

These comments were made in an address to a packed event at the Conference of the UK Liberal Democrats in Bournemouth where Dr Garcia and Minister for Culture Steven Linares hosted the traditional Gibraltar Government reception.

The Deputy Chief Minister updated delegates on recent developments in Gibraltar. He outlined the recent incursion by the SVA which led to shots being fired at Gibraltarian anglers and the more recent ramming of a small pleasure boat by the Guardia Civil. He told delegates that Spanish state vessels had entered British Gibraltar Territorial Waters 129 times in August and 80 times so far in September with varying degrees of seriousness.

The continuing incursions had created a degree of uncertainty and apprehension among the boating and angling fraternity. Dr Garcia warned of the risk that lives could be lost at sea if the present situation was allowed to continue.

The Deputy Chief Minister also outlined the continuing attempt by Spain to exclude Gibraltar airport from EU civil aviation measures. He accused Spain of holding the whole of Europe to ransom because of this and stressed that Madrid had failed to honour what they had signed up to at Cordoba.

Dr Garcia explained the latest situation at the border with the ongoing involvement of the European Commission. He made the point that the Spanish Government continued to use the fluidity of border crossings as a political weapon against Gibraltar. He also outlined Gibraltar's participation with the UK in the referendum on remaining within or leaving the European Union.

Lord David Chidgey, a long time supporter of Gibraltar, replied on behalf of the guests and Sir Graham Watson emphasised the unique identity and the right to self-determination of the people of Gibraltar. The event took place in the presence of the party's Foreign Affairs spokesman Tom Brake MP, Alistair Carmichael MP, Defence spokesperson Baroness Jolly and many other friends of Gibraltar like Baroness Harris and Sir Simon Hughes.