



PRESS RELEASE

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Hectic Round of Meetings at Conservative Party Conference for Chief Minister

On Monday, the Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC, concluded an intense series of engagements on the margins of his 24 hour attendance at the Conservative Party Conference in Manchester. The Gibraltar Government hosted its annual reception for MPs and supporters of the Rock which was packed to capacity.

In addition to the support expressed both in his main speech to the plenary of the conference as well as in his address to the Gibraltar reception, Phillip Hammond, the Foreign Secretary, held a lengthy private meeting with the Chief Minister at which current issues were discussed including Gibraltar's concerns at the implications of the in – out vote on the EU and the importance of the single market to the Rock. Mr Picardo extended an invitation to Mr Hammond to visit Gibraltar when the opportunity arises.

Minister for Europe David Lidington similarly met privately with Mr Picardo to discuss Gibraltar issues. Mr Lidington also attended the reception and visited the Gibraltar Stand.

At a private meeting on Monday morning Theresa May, the Home Secretary, met with Mr Picardo and a number of practical issues of common interest and concern were discussed. Action on these will be followed up in coming months.

In a session with Penny Mordaunt, the Minister for the Armed Forces, the Chief Minister highlighted the importance of commencing preliminary discussions on a post-2017 agreement regarding job protection and security for MoD Locally Employed Civilians (or LECs) in Gibraltar. In addition the Government is delighted with the news of a planned continued increase in visits of Royal Navy vessels to Gibraltar, further demonstrating the UK's commitment towards the Defence of Gibraltar and its waters.

With the future of Britain in Europe being a predominant issue in the debate, especially on the conference fringe, Mr Picardo took the opportunity to lobby support across the board.

He met with both Ashley Fox MEP, leader of the Conservative delegation in the European Parliament, and Julie Girling MEP. Both are MEPs for the South West Region and Gibraltar. Mr Picardo thanked Mr Fox for making Gibraltar the first theme of his address to the plenary meeting of the conference.



Before flying out from Manchester the Chief Minister sat on a Friends of the British Overseas Territories Panel Event with Roger Edwards MLA, Falkland Islands Government, and Andrew Rosindell MP, Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the British Overseas Territories.

The Chief Minister also took the opportunity to also meet with Guernsey Ministers Kevin Stewart and Gavin St Pier, Jersey Chief Minister Ian Gorst and Assistant Chief Minister Philip Ozouf.

The Chief Minister also met with Jack Lopresti, Chairman of the All Party Gibraltar Group in the House of Commons.

The Chief Minister said: "It's been a hectic 24 hours but well worth it for Gibraltar. I have met three senior Ministers and both David Lidington and Penny Mordaunt, who hold important briefs for Gibraltar. We had huge support at our reception, as usual, and the words of the Foreign Secretary in respect of incursions have been more robust than we have heard for some time. That demonstrates the clear common purpose of the UK and Gibraltar Governments on a number of fronts, not least in respect of the British sovereignty of Gibraltar and its Territorial Waters. I am very pleased with the reception we got and the warmth of the welcome, as well as with the detail of the matters discussed at ministerial level."