



Deputy Chief Minister

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Further Visit of Assistants to Members of the European Parliament

Following the success of the first visit of assistants of Members of the European Parliament to Gibraltar in June, the Government's Representation to the EU in Brussels has once again organised a familiarisation visit of assistants to Gibraltar. The visit supports work carried out by the Government on a day to day basis in Brussels to raise awareness about Gibraltar and the challenges that it faces.

The visits help to generate interest in Gibraltar amongst young European professionals that are active in EU circles and provide the Government with a chance to highlight issues such as Gibraltar's constitutional relationship with the UK, its status within the EU and explain its policy priorities. These concepts are often misunderstood outside of the United Kingdom and Spain.

The visits also provide the Government with an opportunity to showcase the fact that Gibraltar is a very pro-European territory with an excellent track record in both the transposition and implementation of European measures.

The assistants come from various EU Member States including the Czech Republic, Greece, Romania, UK and Germany and they work on EU matters which are of interest to Gibraltar such as tourism and aviation.

Sir Graham Watson explained that:

"Similar programmes are run by other governments to offer young professionals the opportunity to explore areas with which they are not yet familiar. This programme highlights the challenges Gibraltar faces in the EU and debunks the myths spread by others against the Rock and its inhabitants. In the space of a short visit these young people learn not only how physically impressive the rock of Gibraltar is, but also how impressive are the achievements of its people."

The Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Europe, Dr Joseph Garcia said:

"The Government is proud to support this extremely important initiative, which is part of a wider strategy to ensure that the Gibraltar position is understood and promoted in Brussels. I hope to be able to meet personally with these European Parliamentary Assistants to brief them on Gibraltar's current relationship with the EU, the challenges we face and our vision for the future. They will

take this message back to Brussels and will be well-informed when briefing and advising key Members of the European Parliament. These visits are indeed crucial to building and strengthening Gibraltar's relationship with Europe, and to keeping Gibraltar on the European agenda."