

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Gibraltar Feature in The Parliament Magazine**

A Special Report on the EU and Gibraltar has featured in the April edition of the Parliament Magazine. The report is comprised of articles by the Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, the Deputy Chief Minister, the Hon Dr Joseph Garcia MP, and Members of the European Parliament of a variety of nationalities. It focuses on the cross-border tensions created by Spain, and the unwarranted and detrimental impact that this has on Gibraltar's EU membership.

The Chief Minister highlighted how Gibraltar has always sought a positive, progressive and mutually-beneficial relationship with the European Union and how, along with the Deputy Chief Minister, he pays regular visits to Brussels and maintain strong links with many MEPs and EU officials. The Government has invested heavily in the legal infrastructure of its European Union and International Department, with the Gibraltar Office in Brussels due to open later this year under the auspices of Sir Graham Watson, former MEP for South West England and Gibraltar.

Gibraltar's full compliance with all EU Commission recommendations regarding the border were outlined by the Deputy Chief Minister, Dr Joseph Garcia, during his January 2015 visit to the Commission. Indeed, the right of EU nationals to freedom of movement through an internal border of the European Union is of paramount importance, and the Government will continue to stress this message in Gibraltar's relations with Europe until the aim of a free-flowing frontier between two EU neighbours is achieved.

The Deputy Chief Minister strongly emphasised that Spain cannot be allowed to hold the whole of Europe to ransom in pursuit of her narrow political interests as it has done regarding the Single Sky II+ legislation, a sentiment echoed by MEPs Ashley Fox, Clare Moody and Julie Girling. Dr Garcia reminds the Magazine's readers, including MEPs and European Parliamentary staff from across the European Union, that it would be totally unacceptable to bow to Spanish pressure and create a civil aviation regime that accords fewer rights and benefits to EU nationals flying to and from Gibraltar Airport than other EU airports.

The Special Report, however, captures the optimistic outlook of its authors for Gibraltar's continued presence and enhanced position in Europe, and offers hope for improved future relations with Spain. Josep-Maria Terricabras, a Member of the Parliament's constitutional affairs committee, notes that the attitude of the Spanish government towards Gibraltar is 'uncharacteristic of a European ally in the 21st century'. However, Iskra Mihaylova, a Chair of the



Parliament's regional development committee, notes that the opportunities offered by European territorial cooperation programmes for countries like Gibraltar and Spain to look outwards, work together and coordinate activities as partners.

HM Government of Gibraltar is dedicated to a positive approach to the European Union and is wholly committed to full transparency with all EU partners. Gibraltar is a fully-compliant, innovative and progressive member of the EU, and deserves to be treated as such in our relationship with EU partners and institutions. Whilst many in the UK look away from Europe, HM Government of Gibraltar looks towards Europe as long as Gibraltar's position in it is fully respected and upheld. Simultaneously, Gibraltar's legal and Treaty rights cannot be any less important simply because of its small size.