



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR

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Spain must comply with border recommendations Garcia tells Commission

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has told the European Commission that Gibraltar has now complied with all the recommendations made to it in relation to the border and that it is about time that Spain complied with those made to them. These comments were made during the last day of Dr Garcia's visit to Brussels in a meeting with the Director General of Home Affairs, whose department is responsible for the investigation into the frontier.

Dr Garcia took the opportunity to brief the Commission on the latest developments since his last visit to Brussels. He also presented a dossier for December 2014 which contained statistical data on both the incoming and outgoing delays for every day of the month as well as relevant press cuttings and photographs.

The Deputy Chief Minister stressed that the situation at the border disrupted the lives of thousands of ordinary people on a daily basis. He also made the point that while it was perfectly proper for the Commission to steer clear of sovereignty issues, where they had no competence, they could not abdicate their responsibility for the application of EU law and the EU Treaties. This included the right of EU nationals to freedom of movement through an internal border of the European Union.

The Deputy Chief Minister later made the same points in a separate meeting with the Chairman of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee of the European Parliament Claude Moraes MEP.

The hectic round of meetings continued throughout the day with different members of the European Parliament belonging to different countries and of different political persuasions. This included South West and Gibraltar MEPs Claire Moody, Labour, Molly Scott Cato from the Greens and UKIP Members William Dartmouth and Julia Reid.

Commenting on the visit Dr Garcia said:

"This visit to Brussels is in line with the policy of the Government to raise the profile of Gibraltar in the European Union and to engage with the EU institutions.

It was an intensive visit which included twenty-five meetings and media engagements, as well as a major speech to one of the leading think-tanks in Brussels. I had the opportunity to put Gibraltar's case to two EU Commissioners, a Director-General, three Chairs of European Parliament Committees and MEPs from across the political spectrum, in a programme arranged by Sir Graham Watson.

These meetings run in parallel with a high-profile Gibraltar exhibition in a prominent location in the European Parliament building. The exhibition was very well attended. The media outburst at the stand by a Partido Popular MEP proved counter-productive because it actually gave Gibraltar even more publicity and helped to attract even more attention.

These visits will continue and will be reinforced by the opening of the new Gibraltar representative office in Brussels later this year."