



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR**  
**PRESS OFFICE**  
**No.6 Convent Place**  
**Gibraltar**  
**Tel:20051739; Email: [pressoffice@gibraltar.gov.gi](mailto:pressoffice@gibraltar.gov.gi)**

**PRESS RELEASE**

No: 99/2015

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> February 2015

**Statement of Information to Parliament**

In respect of Hammond / Margallo Meeting: Chief Minister de-briefed in telephone conversation with Foreign Secretary.

Mr Speaker

As honourable members are aware, the Foreign Secretary, the Right Honourable Philip Hammond MP, is today in Madrid for the purposes of meeting with the Spanish Foreign Secretary, Sñr Garcia Margallo y Marfil.

I have this afternoon heard from the Foreign Secretary after he has finished his meeting with Sñr Margallo.

As honourable members will also be aware, the Foreign Secretary has in the past months been embarked on a tour of European capitals holding talks with all EU partners in respect of EU reform.

This visit was part of that tour and included discussion of the foreign policy challenges the UK and Spain share, including continued Russian-backed aggression in Ukraine and the threat of global terrorism.

The Foreign Secretary has confirmed that, during the course of the meetings with his Spanish counterpart he also took the opportunity - as we had agreed he would - to raise the concerns of the UK Government and those of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar.

In particular, the Foreign Secretary raised the issue of the continued incursions by Spanish state vessels into British Gibraltar Territorial Waters which he told Sñr Margallo are illegal under international law and therefore unacceptable.

He also raised the continued delays at the frontier between Gibraltar and Spain.

The Foreign Secretary has also confirmed that he told his Spanish counterpart, as we had agreed, that Spain needs to address delays at the border, which the European Commission has already found to be disproportionate.

Further, and also as agreed between us, Mr Hammond raised our joint disappointment at Spain's holding up EU aviation legislation by seeking to exclude Gibraltar, in a blatant further breach of the Córdoba Agreements, which the UK and Gibraltar continue to honour, and EU Law.

Mr Hammond restated our common call for a return to dialogue in order to deal with these and all other issues and matters of mutual interest to people who live and work on both sides of the frontier.

Mr Speaker, the House will be pleased to note that, in that context, the Foreign Secretary reminded Sñr Margallo that the UK remains strongly committed to the Trilateral Forum for dialogue.

He also told him that until we can return to that forum, we in the United Kingdom and Gibraltar will continue to work towards ad hoc talks, involving all relevant parties, on issues of mutual interest.

The Foreign Secretary informed me that Sñr Margallo has made a further proposal in this respect today which the Government will now be further considering with UK colleagues.

Mr Speaker, no one should confuse, or allow anyone else to confuse them into thinking, that the raising of the issues about Gibraltar today amounted in any way to a bilateral negotiation about Gibraltar.

No such negotiation would be acceptable to the people or Government of Gibraltar and this House.

Indeed the UK, through its Foreign Secretary, has confirmed again today in Madrid its strong commitment to the Trilateral Forum and its and our hopes to return to that Forum whenever possible.

As Ministers have already stated, Spain is a key partner for the UK, as it is for Gibraltar, but the UK/Spain bilateral relationship is not as strong as it could be due to recent Spanish actions towards Gibraltar and its people.

Mr Speaker, in that context, the Government is pleased that the position set out by the Foreign Secretary in Madrid is exactly in keeping with what was agreed between us and entirely represents the position of the Government and people of Gibraltar.

Mr Speaker, I trust that this statement will assist the House.