



Date: 26th June 2017

Budget Summary – The Hon Dr Joseph Garcia, Deputy Chief Minister

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has told Parliament that he leaves for Brussels tomorrow in order to open an important exhibition about Gibraltar in the European Parliament. This is part of the policy of the Government to continue to raise the profile of Gibraltar in the EU, in particular in the present climate.

Dr Garcia provided a detailed analysis of work related to the UK and Gibraltar's departure from the European Union, during the course of the Budget debate that started in Parliament today. The impact and implications of Brexit have made up the bulk of his address.

Dr Garcia explained that the Government put two action points in motion immediately after the referendum last year. The first was a detailed analysis of the impact of different types of Brexit across all areas of the economy. The second was to examine all the options open to Gibraltar post-Brexit.

The Deputy Chief Minister said it was nonsensical for Spain to expect its proposal for shared sovereignty to be taken seriously. This was rejected by the people of Gibraltar in two referenda and it continued to be rejected to this day. Moreover, there was no link between shared sovereignty and Brexit.

Dr Garcia said that no other nation state adopts the hostile and aggressive attitude towards a neighbouring micro-state like Spain adopts towards Gibraltar. He pointed out that there were micro-states bordering France, Italy, Switzerland and Austria and that none of the countries sought to blockade and take-over their small neighbours. Spain was the odd one out.

The Deputy Chief Minister outlined the importance of a frictionless and fluid land border going forward both to Gibraltar and to the neighbouring region of Spain. He highlighted a number of potential solutions in this field before outlining the potential challenges raised in other areas like civil aviation.

He said that the Government have left no stone unturned in dealing with work related to Brexit and that they had been praised for this by Parliamentarians from other countries. Dr Garcia said that the EU Council guidelines purported to provide Spain with a second veto on Gibraltar related matters and said that this was an affront to the 96% locally who voted in favour of remaining in the EU.



In general terms, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the hostile objectives of Spanish policy were probably the single greatest threat to Gibraltar particularly in the maritime arena and he said that the Government remained alert to Spanish arguments in order to counter them as necessary.

Dr Garcia highlighted the work of the Gibraltar offices in London and Brussels both in relation to Brexit and to political matters in general. He went over the lobbying work that the Government has conducted in the UK, the EU and the United States.