



Deputy Chief Minister

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Spain seeks "apartheid" treatment for Gibraltar in Brexit talks says Garcia**

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has warned that Spain cannot be allowed to get away with creating an "apartheid" treatment for Gibraltar as a consequence of the negotiations for the future relationship of the United Kingdom with the European Union. Dr Garcia was speaking to an audience of MEPs, Parliamentary assistants and Eurocrats at the European Parliament in Brussels during the opening of a high-profile exhibition about Gibraltar in the main concourse of the building. Robin Walker, the U.K.'s Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union was also present.

Dr Garcia said that the people of Gibraltar were EU nationals and deserved to be treated with respect following the 96% vote to remain in the European Union last year. The clear objective of Spanish policy, as shown by the EU negotiating guidelines, is to push Gibraltar to the sidelines and deal with it separately from U.K., so that Spain can continue to bully us, away from public view, at the end of the negotiations.

The circumstances of Gibraltar are very different to those of the United Kingdom and the issues are also very different also, said Dr Garcia. However, the EU had an obligation to assist those enthusiastic Europeans who live in Gibraltar and to protect them from such potential bullying and discriminatory treatment.

Clause 24 of the Council negotiating guidelines created the concept of a second Spanish veto which applied to Gibraltar issues alone. This constituted a shameful abdication of their responsibility on the part of the Council.

Dr Garcia explained that it was a matter of Government policy to take Gibraltar to the heart of European decision-making in order to explain the reality of the situation. There was so much misinformation about Gibraltar being put around by Madrid that it was important to counter what was being said. "This exhibition is part of an annual series that have been organised over the last few years, but the timing of this year's exhibition could not be better," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister thanked South West and Gibraltar MEP Molly Scott Cato for securing the prime exhibition location this year and also expressed the appreciation of the



Government to Sir Graham Watson and the Representation in Brussels for their continuing work. He said Gibraltar was fortunate to count on cross-party support in the European and the U.K. Parliaments and this would assume greater importance as events unfold.