



Deputy Chief Minister

PRESS RELEASE

No: 544/2017

Date: 17th September 2017

Garcia calls for free-flowing border post-Brexit

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has said that it is in the best interests of all sides to ensure that there is a free flowing border between Gibraltar and Spain post-Brexit. He made these comments in a discussion entitled "Brexit and Borders" during the annual conference of the UK Liberal Democrats in Bournemouth.

Dr Garcia spoke as part of a panel discussion together with David Ford MLA, former Northern Ireland Justice Minister and Alastair Carmichael MP.

He said that the UK was ultimately responsible for three land borders with the European Union. These are the borders between Northern Ireland and the Republic, Gibraltar and Spain, and between the sovereign bases and the Republic of Cyprus. Each of those borders present unique challenges aside from that broad similarity.

The Deputy Chief Minister explained the background to the Gibraltar border making the point that it was already outside the EU Customs Union and that free movement of goods has never applied. This was in sharp contrast with the position in Northern Ireland, where the existence of the common travel area meant that the debate is about the movement goods more than it is about people.

Dr Garcia explained that in Gibraltar the essence of the discussion was about the movement of people. There were several categories of persons who crossed the border for a variety of reasons. This includes residents on either side of the border, the second category are frontier workers and the third one tourists.

He said there were 13,000 people who came into Gibraltar to work every day and nearly ten million tourists who came in to visit every year. Gibraltar was a microcosm of what Europe should be with thousands of people living on one side of an EU border and choosing to work freely in another.

It was essential that this land access for residents, workers and tourists continued in the future. It would have no impact on the UK itself because, unlike in Northern Ireland, immigration controls exist between the U.K. and Gibraltar. In answer to questions, he explained the challenges that exist



in different parts of the British family of nations, in the Devolved Administrations, the other Overseas Territories and the Crown Dependencies.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that Gibraltar did not want Brexit and did not vote for it. This made it all the more important to ensure that a sensible, orderly and well-managed Brexit resolves any border challenges that present themselves.