



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Partido Popular MEP rant against Gibraltar is disgraceful**

The latest rant against Gibraltar by Partido Popular MEP Esteban Gonzalez Pons is absolutely disgraceful. Mr Pons gives the impression of having been educated in the General Franco school of politics when it comes to his views on Gibraltar. He clearly has absolutely no understanding of the situation and the reality of modern Gibraltar itself.

It is quite incredible that someone who has been elected to the European Parliament should show such scant regard for democracy or human rights. He should understand that under international law, the people of Gibraltar have the right to self-determination and his opinion cannot change that. Gibraltar voted by 99% to remain British in 1967 and we voted 98% to reject any form of shared sovereignty with Spain in 2002. Mr Pons should respect that democratic choice.

Moreover, it is also curious to note that his extreme views appear to be out of step with those of his own party in Government. It was the Partido Popular Government that rightly set aside the question of sovereignty from the negotiations to leave the European Union. It was also the Partido Popular Government that started the engagement directly with the Government of Gibraltar in order to address issues arising from our EU departure together with the United Kingdom.

It is not surprising, given his track record in the past, that Mr Pons should make a series of unfounded, wild allegations against Gibraltar in almost every conceivable area from financial services to the environment. These are completely untrue and nothing more than a smokescreen designed to give credence to his extremist right-wing views on this issue.

He does not care about the principle of consent or the democratic choice of the people of Gibraltar. All he cares about is his quixotic attempt to tilt at Gibraltar's sovereignty as if it were the windmill in Cervantes' novel of a knight who, like Mr Pons, had seen better days and needed to hang up his suit of armour. In this day and age the wishes of people must come first.