



PRESS RELEASE

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Picardo Replies to El Pais Editorial on Gibraltar

The Chief Minister of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, has sent a letter to the Editor of El Pais responding to the ill-informed editorial published by that newspaper yesterday. A translation of the letter to the editor reads as follows:

Dear Editor-in-Chief,

The well-prepared article by your journalist Jesús Cañas regarding Gibraltar is entirely at odds with the regrettable editorial piece in yesterday's edition.

Gibraltar, alongside the United Kingdom, is working on a balanced agreement with the European Union and our neighbour, Spain, at this stage of the Brexit process.

To suggest in any shape or form that Gibraltar may represent "criminality, instability and organised white-collar corruption", as yesterday's editorial piece did, shows such a disregard for truth and reality that it makes me wonder whether El País can continue to claim to be a benchmark of unbiased journalism. The good work of your journalist Jesus Cañas has been scuppered by the anonymous author of this defamatory editorial piece.

This lack of rigour has confused the writer of the editorial, who stated that Gibraltar is recognised as a de facto "tax haven" by international bodies. This is entirely false. The relevant international bodies, including the European Union and the OECD, acknowledge that Gibraltar IS NOT a tax haven. This is the total opposite to the idea put forward by your leader.

If there is "criminality, instability and white-collar corruption" in the area, it is that denounced by the mayors of the municipalities of the Mancomunidad de Municipios of the Campo de Gibraltar. However, their accusations are aimed at the Spanish side of the border, not at Gibraltar. It must be because the port of Algeciras has become one of the largest entry points for cocaine in Europe. Or because the entire Andalusian coast is awash with organised drug traffickers who are experts in the smuggling of hashish. As regards corruption, I would prefer, Madam Editor, not



to delve into a matter which has dealt such a blow to Spain and to the party of her previous government. It is an internal Spanish matter.

In a bid to foster better mutual understanding, which is seriously needed, I believe that the ambition expressed yesterday by the Director of the Instituto Cervantes to reopen an establishment in Gibraltar might therefore be an appropriate move.

As its most senior political representative, I defend the honour of the good people of Gibraltar and our friends in the Campo de Gibraltar. It is about time that Madrid showed more empathy towards our entire area, based on knowledge and understanding, rather than baseless prejudices. That is why I shall not tire of highlighting the reality of our lives and co-existence against the lack of understanding shown beyond Despeñaperros.

With my best wishes,

Fabian Picardo QC MP
Chief Minister
Gibraltar