



PRESS RELEASE

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Garcia calls for unique status for Gibraltar in Strasbourg

In an address in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has said that Gibraltar may possibly want a deeper relationship with the European Union in the future. This came in answer to questions from the Brexit working group of Green/EFA MEPs whom he met at their invitation.

Dr Garcia explained that Gibraltar enjoyed a differentiated, tailor-made relationship with the EU ever since joining its predecessor the European Economic Community in 1973. This status was unique and was therefore not enjoyed by any other Overseas Territory, by the Devolved Administrations or by the Crown Dependencies.

He said that the Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and the EU still needed to be finalised so it was too early to tell what the future might look like. However, he pointed out that 96% of Gibraltar had voted to remain in the EU which suggested that people would want a closer relationship going forward.

There was considerable interest in the details of the Gibraltar Protocol to the Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and the EU and in the five areas of arrangements for practical cooperation being discussed with Spain. The Deputy Chief Minister explained that the positions were now very close. He welcomed the comments which indicated that with the conclusion of the Protocol Gibraltar would be included in the transitional arrangements which are expected to run until the end of 2020.

However, if there was no UK-EU agreement then there would be no Gibraltar Protocol either. There was scope for practical cooperation with Spain nonetheless.

The UK-EU Protocols would cover the three Territories which have a land border with the EU. These were the bases in Cyprus, Northern Ireland and Gibraltar.

Dr Garcia gave those present a brief history of Gibraltar. He said that Gibraltar was taken in 1704 during the War of the Spanish succession by English and Dutch marines under the command of a German Prince and in the name of an Austrian Archduke. This was, he said, a perfect example of European cooperation centuries before the EU had even been thought of!

He went on to explain the constitutional relationship between Gibraltar and the United Kingdom, making the point that we enjoyed a very high degree of self-government.



The Deputy Chief Minister concluded by saying that Gibraltar will overcome the challenges posed by Brexit in the same way that we have overcome other challenges in the past. He thanked Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West and Gibraltar for organising the event.

This was one of a number of Brexit related engagements for Dr Garcia in the European Parliament in line with the policy of the Government of putting across our point of view to decision-makers in Europe.