



PRESS RELEASE

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HM Government of Gibraltar Welcomes Advocate General's Opinion

The Government welcomes the view of the Advocate General to the European Court of Justice in his advisory opinion to the full Court of Justice of the European Union in respect of the potential for a unilateral withdrawal by the United Kingdom of the notification under Article 50 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. This is an opportunity to for the United Kingdom to stop the clock on a potential cliff edge / no deal Brexit in the event of there being no majority in the House of Commons for of the options available on withdrawal.

Today, the Chief Minister has published an article in "The Times" setting out the Gibraltar Government's support for the Prime Minister's Brexit deal in respect of its Gibraltar aspects. The article is based on the notion that, if Brexit is going to happen, it is better for Gibraltar that it should happen with an agreement in place for an orderly withdrawal and not on a cliff edge basis.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "The Gibraltar aspects of the Withdrawal Agreement are an important safety net for Gibraltar if Brexit happens on the basis of this agreement. And this agreement is better for Gibraltar than a Brexit that happens without an agreement in March 2019. But throughout this process Gibraltar's position has been clear and unequivocal: the best option for us is for the UK to remain in the EU. If the UK is going to leave with a deal, the Prime Minister's deal works for Gibraltar. Now that the possibility may be there for a unilateral withdrawal of the Article 50 notification, subject to the final ruling of the Court, there are other options which the Prime Minister can pursue if her deal is repeatedly rejected by Parliament and which do not amount to a cliff-edge / no deal Brexit. That can include - as I first said in July 2016 - the option of calling a new referendum on the real options facing the British people upon Brexit, and not the false prospectus on which the vote was originally held in June 2016. Alternatively, it can mean simply not pursuing Brexit at all upon the unilateral withdrawal of Article 50 notification. That would likely be the preferred option of most Gibraltarians. We must wait to see the outcome of the votes in the House of Commons before being able to determine which of the alternative options to throw our collective weight behind."