



PRESS RELEASE

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Gibraltar Prepares for No Deal Brexit

Today marks 100 days before the United Kingdom and Gibraltar leave the European Union on 29 March 2019. The Government of Gibraltar is stepping-up its preparations for a no deal Brexit. This follows the recent announcement that the United Kingdom, and indeed the European Union institutions, are also doing the same.

The Chief Minister Fabian Picardo and the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia returned from London today, where they attended a lengthy meeting together with the Attorney General Michael Llamas. The no deal preparations were high on the agenda in those discussions with senior officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for Exiting the European Union.

The Chief Minister has designated the Deputy Chief Minister to deal with the logistical aspects of no deal planning and the Attorney General to coordinate the intensive legislative programme which will arise in such circumstances.

It will be recalled that the United Kingdom and the European Union concluded a Withdrawal Agreement in November. Gibraltar is a part of that Agreement and is also included in its transitional provisions. However, the Agreement requires the approval of the United Kingdom Parliament and of the European Parliament.

In the event that the UK Parliament does not approve the Withdrawal Agreement, then the United Kingdom and Gibraltar would leave the EU without a deal. The increased preparations are to implement plans to cover this eventuality.

The Deputy Chief Minister chaired a meeting last week with different Heads of Department and related agencies in order to set out the policy priorities of the Government. The meeting included the Chief Secretary, who leads a working group of officials, and Attorney General Michael Llamas. The Civil Service and Public Sector as a whole will play an important part of plans for a no deal exit.

The Government prepared an impact study on the consequences of different types of Brexit as early as 2016, within weeks of the referendum decision. This involved consultation across the public and private sectors and led to feedback from different entities. In the autumn of 2017 there was another round of consultation on more specific proposals with a number of public and private



sector bodies. The Chamber of Commerce was given a confidential briefing at their request. There have, in addition, been discussions with the Ministry of Defence and The Convent.

The Cabinet was briefed on Monday on the main areas where a no deal Brexit would be expected to have an impact. The Brexit Select Committee of the Gibraltar Parliament was itself briefed after the summer.

The Government has continued with the publication of Technical Notices in preparation for a no deal Brexit. The first set of guidelines on passports, the second on pet passports and the third on driving licences and motor insurance have already been issued. More will follow.

Commenting on the preparations, the Deputy Chief Minister, who is responsible for work relating to our EU exit, said:

“The preparations for a no deal Brexit does not mean that this is going to happen. It means that we need to plan for it in case it does. There is no need to panic. However, citizens and businesses need to be aware of the implications of leaving the EU without a deal, in order to mitigate the effects of this. The Government will itself take the lead in many areas.

“Gibraltar voted to remain in the European Union. Our best deal would be the withdrawal of the Article 50 letter and staying in the EU with the UK. However, the UK is leaving and if they go, we must go as well. Our historical, cultural, political, social and economic ties are with the United Kingdom and Brexit will not alter that.”

The Chief Minister, Fabian Picardo, said: “As I told the Lords’ EU Select Committee, we are now going to step up our implementation programme for a no deal eventuality. In doing so, we will rely on great measure also on the work of our excellent Public Servants, in the Civil Service, the GDC and the wider Public Sector. We will be applying the same principles in our planning as have been applied in Operation Yellowhammer in the United Kingdom. We will also be working more closely now with the Private Sector and Unions to coordinate our positions across the community so that our National Readiness Action Plan is ready to kick in by the time a no deal might become an unfortunate reality which we will continue to work to avoid.”