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## **Gibraltar continues preparations for a no deal Brexit**

The Gibraltar and United Kingdom Governments have met again in Gibraltar in preparation for our departure from the European Union. This meeting centred on plans for no deal Brexit, which means leaving without the Withdrawal Agreement that was concluded between the UK and the EU in November.

The latest meeting was chaired by the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia, who is responsible for work related to our EU departure. It included representatives from the UK Department for Exiting the European Union, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (The Convent) and the Ministry of Defence. The Gibraltar side included the Chief Secretary Darren Grech, the Attorney General Michael Llamas, Chief Scientist Liesl Mesilio, Principal Secretary to the Deputy Chief Minister Caine Sanchez, Civil Contingencies Coordinator Ivor Lopez and Senior Law Draftsman Paul Peralta.

The Brexit structure is the core team of the Chief Minister, the Deputy Chief Minister, the Attorney General and the Financial Secretary. There is then the Brexit Strategic Group which is responsible for setting overall policy and direction to the Brexit Executive Group which is only made up of officials. There are six Brexit Resilience Groups which then take direction from above and report information back into the structure.

The on-going work of the Brexit Resilience Groups was discussed and reports were received from each of them. These groups, made up of Gibraltar officials, cover Critical Services, Health and Social Care, Law and Order, Public Services, Commerce and the Supply Chain.

There is separate work proceeding on legislative matters under the direction of the Attorney General. It will be recalled that Parliament passed the European Union (Withdrawal) Act at its last meeting.

This continuing work at official level has generated the request for a number of policy decisions across a wide range of areas. The Cabinet has adopted over thirty Brexit policy decisions at its last two meetings. It is expected that the volume of work will accelerate even further in the coming weeks.

In addition to this, the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo, the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia and the Minister for Commerce Albert Isola have discussed Brexit contingency planning this week with the Boards of the Gibraltar Federation of Small Businesses and of the Chamber of Commerce. This continues the contact with private sector individual companies and organisations which was initiated in 2016 straight after the referendum.



The Government has already published a series of technical notices covering some issues raised by a no deal Brexit in order to ensure that the public and the business community are kept informed.

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia said:

“It is important to stress that planning for a no deal Brexit does not mean that this is going to happen. There are on-going discussions between the United Kingdom and the European Union to try and secure approval of the Withdrawal Agreement which provides for the orderly departure of the United Kingdom and Gibraltar from the European Union. However, it is our duty as a responsible Government to make preparations for exiting the European Union on 29 March without an agreement and that is what we are doing. There is very positive on-going work between different departments of the UK and Gibraltar Governments taking place behind the scenes almost on a daily basis.”