



No: 144/2019

Date: 1st March 2019

Deputy Chief Minister briefs MEP Assistants

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has told a visiting group of MEP Assistants that the European Union has let people in Gibraltar down even though 96% voted to remain in the referendum of June 2016. The Assistants are here as part of the regular visits organised by the Government to increase the knowledge and awareness of Gibraltar in Brussels.

He explained that the issues in Gibraltar were very different to the issues that faced the United Kingdom. We have the additional complication of a next door neighbour that often chooses to be difficult, he added.

Dr Garcia addressed the latest group of assistants to visit Gibraltar on the details of our departure from the European Union. He explained that an orderly departure had been secured through the Withdrawal Agreement that was concluded in November last year. This package provided for a Gibraltar Protocol and four memoranda of understanding and secured Gibraltar's position within the transitional period until the end of 2020. This needed the approval of the UK Parliament and of the European Parliament.

However, in the event of a no deal Brexit, he said that detailed contingency planning was underway to prepare for Gibraltar leaving with no agreement. The Spanish Government had nonetheless included Gibraltar in their own contingency plans for British nationals and for the United Kingdom which covered a number of different areas.

The visitors asked a number of questions about Brexit but also wanted to know about the international status of Gibraltar. Dr Garcia explained that the people of Gibraltar have lived here for over three hundred years, which is longer than the United States, Germany or Italy have existed. He maintained that the future of Gibraltar must be freely and democratically decided by the people of Gibraltar in exercise of their right to self-determination.