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Opposition is Playing Politics Over Serious Issue of Brexit Planning

The Government deeply regrets the continuing scaremongering by the Opposition in relation to the ongoing planning which continues to take place for a no deal Brexit.

In a Viewpoint programme last week, the Leader of the Opposition Elliott Philips complained that the United Kingdom Government has issued more pages of Technical Notices than the Government of Gibraltar.

Anyone who has watched the programme will be forgiven for thinking that Mr Philips has no idea of the differences that exist between the United Kingdom's terms of membership of the European Union as compared to the terms of membership of Gibraltar.

It is obvious that more Technical Notices will be issued in the United Kingdom. This is first because the United Kingdom is a Member State and secondly because its membership covers areas which have never applied to Gibraltar.

Mr Philips should know that Gibraltar is already outside the Customs Union, has no manufacturing industry, does not apply VAT, is outside the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy. That alone accounts for a huge part of the EU Acquis which does not apply here.

This is simply why the UK has issued Technical Notices which cover more areas than Gibraltar. Many of these, for example, have covered matters like Farm Payments, Nuclear Research, Humanitarian Aid, Export of Controlled Goods, Regulating Chemicals and Exporting animals, to name but a few. These are irrelevant to Gibraltar.

Moreover, given the specific circumstances of Gibraltar, there are some issues which need to be handled sensitively in private meetings with interested parties again for very obvious reasons. The Government has held well over fifty meetings with commercial entities and different representative bodies and organisations. These meetings are live and ongoing.

There are also other specific areas in the pipeline still to come.

It is incredible that the Opposition should continue to play politics on a matter as serious and as important as our departure from the European Union. Their use of half-truths in the full knowledge of the reality behind the scenes is nothing short of shameful.