



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

Stephen Doughty MP

Minister of State for Europe, North
America and UK Overseas Territories
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

The Honourable Mr Fabian Picardo KC
MP
Chief Minister
Gibraltar

13 July 2026

Dear Chief Minister,

As we prepare to sign the UK-EU Treaty in respect of Gibraltar, I wanted to write regarding the recent discussions on the UK-Gibraltar Concordat.

The Treaty establishes a new and unprecedented framework for Gibraltar's relationship with the European Union. Following extensive discussion over recent months, the Concordat reflects the political understanding reached between our Governments on the practical arrangements that underpin that relationship. I want to assure you that signature of the Treaty does not mark the end of the conversation between our Governments on these matters.

Firstly, there has been some discussion on the phrase that the United Kingdom Government will not “other than in the most exceptional circumstances” do certain things contrary to the wishes of Gibraltar. The phrase appears under the Cooperation, Significant Actions, Dispute Settlement and Termination/Suspension chapters of the Concordat.

This phrase reflects the shared understanding that, in relation to the exercise of powers within the Treaty, the United Kingdom Government would follow the democratically expressed wishes of Gibraltar and would not do, or omit to do, anything contrary to those wishes in all but truly exceptional circumstances. This is intended to set an extremely high threshold and is consistent with the principle that there should be “nothing about Gibraltar without Gibraltar”, while also recognising the United Kingdom's constitutional responsibilities. This is the basis on which myself and ministerial colleagues have also described the arrangement in Parliament.

That is also consistent with the principle of the Double Lock, as explicitly referred to in the Concordat.

I consider it would only be in the most extreme cases, such as where there was grave impact on the United Kingdom's essential interests that we would take such action. Quite frankly, I consider it inconceivable that such circumstances would ever arise.

The above applies with particular force to the Termination/Suspension provisions of the Concordat which covers both a situation where Gibraltar were to request the United Kingdom to terminate the Agreement as well as a situation where the United Kingdom Government were minded to terminate the Agreement without it having been requested by Gibraltar.

I hope that the foregoing gives the additional reassurances you have sought. Finally, it is clear that the discussions on the Concordat have also highlighted the nature of the constitutional relationship between the United Kingdom and Gibraltar and the need to take stock of how that relationship is operating in practice.

Following signature and provisional application of the Treaty, I would welcome a structured discussion between our respective Governments on any issues that either side considers would merit further consideration in light of the new Treaty framework, to ensure it operates effectively with respect to our respective duties and competencies.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with you as we move into implementation of this historic agreement.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Stephen Doughty". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Stephen Doughty MP
Minister of State for Europe, North America and UK Overseas Territories