



HM Government
of Gibraltar

THE CHIEF MINISTER

Hon Sir Bill Cash MP
Chair
European Scrutiny Committee
House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1

1st May 2024

Dear Sir Bill,

GIBRALTAR NEGOTIATION

It is an honour to write to you on International Workers Day, a Bank Holiday in Gibraltar since I was elected in 2011.

You will be aware of my recent request, via our London office, to appear before your European Scrutiny Committee, either alongside David Rutley MP, now the minister responsible for Gibraltar, or shortly after his appearance. I regret that this was not taken up and that my recent letter to you in this respect has, uncharacteristically, not had the benefit of a reply from you or your committee, the members of which, I know, are keenly defensive of Gibraltar and its people.

Having followed the session today I must reiterate my request in writing to appear before the Committee and provide you with Gibraltar's perspective on the questions that your members may wish to ask.

I am pleased to say, once again, that we have been working very closely with the British Government, No 10, and the FCDO in particular, ever since we all left the European Union. Lord Cameron, the Foreign Secretary, is very supportive and knows Gibraltar well.

I want to be clear immediately that the impression some of your members have expressed, that British sovereignty will be diminished in any way by the agreements we are seeking, is one that is abhorrent to me.



As Chief Minister of Gibraltar I am not prepared to cede an iota of our British sovereignty. Were there any such risk, my team would have walked away from these talks immediately. We would still do so even today.

As the Committee has heard from myself and Deputy Chief Minister, Hon Dr Joseph Garcia MP, we have very developed plans in place for a Non Negotiated Outcome (NNO). We are confident also that we have the full backing of your Committee and the British Parliament for the practical and economic support that would be required should an unacceptable proposal block these negotiations. The fact is that the change in our relationship with the EU, and the fact that we were not included in the initial UK TCA, has led to protracted and complicated negotiations which we continue to engage in on a very positive basis with UK, the European Commission and Spain, which is our neighbouring Member State.

Mr Rutley gave very clear answers at your session today, but I have been involved in this process since the outset and Gibraltar's perspective is, I hope you will agree, crucial. Additionally, conflation with the issues that have affected Northern Ireland is neither accurate nor helpful. This is why I think the Committee would find it helpful to have an update from His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar which I think would go a long way to answering concerns on the very specific issues that relate to Gibraltar.

As I have told Parliament and your Committee in the past, Gibraltar is British, British, British and it will remain so entirely. That is unchangeable and the people of Gibraltar have always been the best guardians of that.

I make myself available at the earliest opportunity to address your Committee.

With fondest best wishes, as ever,
sincerely,

Fabian Picardo KC MP
Chief Minister