



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Garcia defends Gibraltar's inclusion in EU aviation laws**

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia today met with EU Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc and the Regional Policy Commissioner Corina Cretu as part of a hectic schedule of meetings and media engagements in Brussels.

Dr Garcia explained the position of the Government of Gibraltar to Commissioner Bulc in relation to the inclusion of Gibraltar Airport in EU civil aviation measures. He made the point that Gibraltar has been a part of Europe since 1973 and EU aviation legislation had always applied without question until soon after Spain joined.

The Deputy Chief Minister emphasised the point that Spain had agreed in 2006 to cease seeking the exclusion of Gibraltar from EU aviation legislation and that the present impasse was caused by the change in position five years later of the new Partido Popular Government. This argument was about the right of EU nationals to be able to enjoy the benefits of EU membership in an EU airport.

The Deputy Chief Minister later met the Regional Policy Commissioner Corina Cretu. The Commissioner recently approved the latest 2014-2020 ERDF funding programme for Gibraltar. Dr Garcia took the opportunity to thank the Commissioner and her officials for their support and for making this happen.

These meetings were followed up with further discussions on the same subjects with the Chair of the two respective Parliamentary Committees of the European Parliament, Michael Cramer MEP Chair of the Transport Committee and Iskra Mihaylova MEP the Chair of the Regional Policy Committee.

Dr Garcia was earlier received by one of the Vice Presidents of the European Parliament Olli Rehn MEP. There were several meetings with MEPs in order to update them on Gibraltar political issues including South West and Gibraltar Conservative MEPs Ashley Fox and Julie Girling as well as Liberal Democrat Catherine Bearder.

Indeed, it was Ashley Fox MEP who made available a slot for the Gibraltar exhibition in the main foyer of the European Parliament which has run parallel to these meetings. The exhibition has provoked considerable interest from journalists, MEPs and their assistants with persons often queuing up in order to ask questions. The stand is being manned by Caine Sanchez, the Deputy Chief Minister's Principal Secretary, Stuart Green from the No 6 Press Office and Daniel D'Amato from the European Union and International Department, EUID.

The non-stop programme of meetings for the Deputy Chief Minister, which have been arranged by Sir Graham Watson, continue tomorrow and will include a keynote speech on the challenges for Gibraltar in Europe to a Brussels-based discussion forum.