



PRESS RELEASE

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Government submits a paper on “Brexit” to Foreign Affairs Committee

Her Majesty’s Government of Gibraltar has made a submission to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons on the consequences for Gibraltar of the Referendum to determine whether the United Kingdom should remain in the European Union or should leave.

The document explains that Gibraltar entered the European Economic Community, as it was then, in 1973 as a European territory for whose external relations a Member State is responsible. It outlines Gibraltar’s terms of membership and traces the sequence of events that led to the opening of the border in 1985.

The paper reminds the Committee that “EU membership has been an important factor in the development of Gibraltar’s economy” and it explains how Gibraltar has embraced the challenge of compliance with regulations and directives. It stresses that access to the single market is important to Gibraltar’s economy and adds that commerce in Gibraltar and indeed in the neighbouring Spanish region rely on a free flow through the border.

The Government points out the importance to Gibraltar of ensuring proper access through the frontier and it gives details of the problems that arose in 2013 which necessitated the personal intervention of the Prime Minister David Cameron.

“Our membership of the European Union has been a unifying issue in Gibraltar politics”, the paper points out, and it adds that both the Government and the Opposition in Gibraltar are united on the position of remaining in the European Union.

It “is important that there should be clarity as to the rights the British Government will protect and defend for Gibraltar in the context of its own negotiations if the referendum decides for leaving the EU”, says the paper. The Government warns that it is essential that the United Kingdom guards against attempts by Spain to take advantage of the present situation by advancing its claim to Gibraltar.

In a covering letter to the Chairman of the Committee Crispin Blunt MP, the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia, who is the Minister for European Affairs, has said that the position of the Parliament, Government, Opposition and all the political parties in Gibraltar is that remaining in the European Union is undoubtedly the outcome that would be in Gibraltar’s best interests.



“We believe that our position on a vote to stay will be substantially reflected in the outcome in Gibraltar when our people exercise their right to vote on this issue of vital importance, not just to Gibraltar but to the United Kingdom and the European Union itself.”

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC, said: "I think it is important that we should make our position clear to the Foreign Affairs Committee. They have been very helpful to Gibraltar in the past and I have no doubt that the submission of our paper will greatly assist them and other British Parliamentarians to understand the deeply held concerns of the people of Gibraltar."