



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Margallo continues personal obsession with Gibraltar**

The Acting Foreign Minister of Spain, Mr Margallo, continues to link the “Brexit” negotiations between the United Kingdom and the European Union with his fantasy of sharing of the sovereignty of Gibraltar between the UK and Spain when one thing has clearly got nothing to do with the other.

His latest comments on the subject reflect his continued and unhealthy personal obsession with Gibraltar which has been a hallmark of his tenure as Foreign Minister of Spain from the very moment that he took office.

The Spanish Foreign Minister should recall that in 2002 the very principle of shared-sovereignty was overwhelmingly rejected by the people of Gibraltar freely and democratically in a referendum. This view has not changed and those democratic wishes must be respected.

The people of Gibraltar are therefore not going to be blackmailed by Mr Margallo into accepting something that has already been rejected.

It is also quite incredible that instead of making a positive contribution to the “Brexit” debate, Mr Margallo should threaten that there will be unpleasant internal discussions within the EU, presumably in the event that his idea of joint-sovereignty is not taken forward. Unfortunately, he does not seem to appreciate that the consequences of “Brexit” could potentially be very serious for Spain itself in terms of investment, trade and tourism. Indeed, many ordinary Spaniards have more serious things to worry about than Gibraltar and do not share the obsession of their Foreign Minister.

The coming UK-EU negotiations will not be triggered until the UK gives formal notice under Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon. It is in the interests of all parties that these should take place in a civilised and friendly spirit and not with the hostile and confrontational attitude that Mr Margallo continues to display.

The reality is that Spanish sovereignty over Gibraltar is as far away today as it has ever been.

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "It's time that we saw a more mature approach from the Spanish Foreign Ministry on the issues Brexit raises for Spain, the United Kingdom and Gibraltar. This fanciful and futile repetition of the nonsense of Joint Sovereignty is a waste of Europe's time and energy, and a waste of time for the people of the Campo who are once



again facing the prospect of losing their jobs in Gibraltar by these veiled threats from a man who has failed to advance Spain's claim to Gibraltar one millimetre in his much criticised tenure as Foreign Minister. History will be a stern judge of Mr Margallo's record as the undiplomatic head of Spanish diplomacy."