



Deputy Chief Minister

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Garcia highlights Brexit challenges for Gibraltar to London Convention

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has raised some of the challenges that Gibraltar faces in a Brexit Convention which opened in London this morning. Dr Garcia was part of a panel discussion entitled "Will Europe make it?".

There was applause in the hall when Dr Garcia recalled the 96% vote in favour of remaining in the EU in Gibraltar, the highest in the entire voting electorate. He explained that Brexit was already complicated enough for the UK, without the added dimension that Gibraltar faced of a hostile and difficult neighbour.

In response to a direct question on aviation issues, Dr Garcia went over how Spain had rescinded from an agreement to stop blocking the application of EU law to Gibraltar Airport and to construct a connecting building on the Spanish side.

He then highlighted the importance of frontier fluidity for twelve thousand frontier workers, ten million tourists and residents on either side. He made the point that whereas freedom of movement and immigration were issues in the United Kingdom, these were not issues in Gibraltar.

On the wider subject, Dr Garcia said that there was some recognition among the European institutions that the EU needed to renew or to reinvent itself. He pointed to the White Paper produced by the European Commission, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, which set out a number of options going forward. These ranged from reverting to a European Economic Community (a trading block), to going for a multi-speed Europe or for an outright federal solution.

The panel discussion was chaired by Charles Grant, the Director of the Centre for European Reform and it included the Deputy Leader of the Labour MEPs Richard Corbett, Liberal Democrat Candidate Louise Rountree, writer Federic Martel and EU lawyer Laurent Pech.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that it was important for Gibraltar to be considered as part of the general Brexit debate in the United Kingdom and this participation was therefore very relevant in this context.