



Deputy Chief Minister

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Understanding Referenda and Self Determination in Europe - International Symposium at the Gibraltar Garrison Library 12th - 14th October 2017**

An international academic symposium on referenda and the right to self-determination will be opened by the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia at the Gibraltar Garrison Library on Thursday. The event has been organised by Dr Jennifer Ballantine Perera of the Garrison Library together with the Office of the Deputy Chief Minister.

Currently in their fifth edition, the symposiums at the Garrison Library focus on issues that impact on Gibraltar and other territories within a European and global framework. The topic this year has certainly been driven by the 2017 commemoration of the 50th anniversary since Gibraltar's 1967 sovereignty referendum and indeed, the 15th anniversary of the 2002 joint sovereignty ballot. In both these cases, the people of Gibraltar were called upon to make a decision on the sovereignty and status of Gibraltar. In 1967 they were given the choice of remaining British or becoming part of Spain, and the choice by 12138 votes to 44 was to remain British. In 2002, the people of Gibraltar were called upon to accept or reject the principle of sharing sovereignty over the Rock between the UK and Spain. The principle of shared sovereignty was overwhelmingly rejected.

Referenda has, however, been an important topic outside Gibraltar too for some years now. There was a vote in 2014 in Scotland. The Brexit Referendum took place in 2016. There has been talk of a second Scottish ballot and there are calls in the UK for another referendum on the details of the final agreement between the United Kingdom and the European Union.

Indeed, it is the case that the 2016 Brexit vote and the recent referendum in Catalonia have generated much debate on the approach, the mechanics and the almost infectious nature of referenda, which has in turn opened up the possibility for other European states to consider moving forward with referenda on their own place in the European Union.

As such the themes under discussion are very pertinent to the on-going debates taking place in Gibraltar, the United Kingdom and Europe. Their scope will include areas such as self-determination, cultural and national identity, borders and migrations; the mechanics of referenda



and voting patterns; colonialism and post-colonialism as indeed, the historical contexts for a Federal State of Europe and the landscape for a post-Brexit Europe. These will be discussed through a series of sessions over two and a half days.

A panel of fifteen high-profile international and local speakers will put their views forward during the symposium, which will include academics from Cambridge, Kings College London, University of Greenland, Aalborg University, Trinity College Dublin, University of the Faroe Islands, Brussels, University of Edinburgh, University of Cadiz, University of Birmingham, University of Denmark, University of Catalonia and the University of Gibraltar.

The event will be formally opened by the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia on Thursday 12th at 9.30 am at the Gibraltar Garrison Library and closes on Saturday 14th October at 1.00pm. It is open to the public and the entrance is free of charge.

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