



HM Government of Gibraltar

Deputy Chief Minister

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Brexit has Brought Gibraltar and Scotland Closer Together, says Garcia

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has said that one positive outcome of the Brexit referendum is that it has brought Gibraltar and the Devolved Administrations like Scotland closer together in a way which had never happened before. He was speaking in Glasgow during the conference of the Scottish National Party.

In response, Scotland's External Affairs Minister Fiona Hyslop MSP welcomed the Gibraltar delegation to Glasgow and declared her support for our right to self-determination.

Dr Garcia pointed to the Brexit work that was being undertaken by the Gibraltar Government with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which has included meetings at the highest political level with the First Ministers of the former two nations. He also referred to the educational link which was embodied in the many students from Gibraltar who had chosen to study at Scottish universities over the years. He explained that Health Minister Neil Costa had that very morning held very useful discussions in Glasgow with Scotland's Health Minister Shona Robison MSP.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the links between Gibraltar and Scotland were historic and deep. He went over how Scottish Regiments had contributed to the defence of Gibraltar over the centuries, including during the Great Siege. This was the longest siege in British history and those who successfully defended the Rock against the superior combined forces of Spain and France were led by a Scotsman General George Augustus Elliott.

We are grateful for this, he told those present.

Dr Garcia then went over the background to the 1967 and 2002 referenda. On both occasions the people of Gibraltar had voted in the full knowledge of the consequences that would follow. He explained how the 2002 vote had been described as "illegal" and "eccentric" and how it was held in the face of opposition from both the United Kingdom and Spain. Despite the fact that the UK did not agree with it and did not want it to happen, there was no attempt to prevent our people from casting their vote.



The 2014 referendum in Scotland, which was agreed between London and Edinburgh, was a further shining example of democracy in action. History has shown that swinging truncheons and brute force will never bury an ideal, he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister outlined Gibraltar's constitutional position to those present. He said that we were British, self-governing, Her Majesty the Queen was Head of State, the currency was the pound sterling and we were in the European Union but not part of the United Kingdom. He said that Gibraltar enjoyed "Devo-Max" because the Government was responsible for everything except defence, external relations and internal security.

Dr Garcia said that Gibraltar did not want Brexit and did not vote for it, but was now engaged in trying to secure a deal in line with its priorities.

He declared that in this day and age the principle of self-determination was paramount and that a people, however small, enjoyed the right to determine their own future. This is people power and this is what democracy is all about, he said to applause from those present.

Earlier, Dr Garcia and Mr Costa had the opportunity for a detailed exchange of views with the First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon at the Gibraltar stand which was located in a prominent part of the exhibition hall. The First Minister asked a number of questions and spent some time in discussions comparing Gibraltar and Scotland. She was given an outline briefing of Gibraltar's Brexit priorities and shown the physical layout of the land border with Spain and the airport area from a huge aerial photograph which forms part of the display panel.