



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Azopardi indulges his ego at the wrong time in our history**

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar consider that Mr Azopardi should be careful that his efforts to make himself relevant do not undermine the wider interests of Gibraltar.

He gives the impression of failing to understand that in his present position he does not represent the people of Gibraltar in any way. Unlike his colleagues, he is not an elected Member of Parliament.

This does not mean for one moment that he is not entitled to hold an opinion or indeed be able to fully express it. What it does mean, however, is that he should be more humble and less pretentious in his approach.

Mr Azopardi's problem in part seems to be that Brexit has been an ongoing issue for over twenty months whilst he has only been around in his current role for five months. This may be what explains the apparent lack of background or basic knowledge of the issue.

The people of Gibraltar gave the GSLP/Liberals a vote of confidence in the 2015 general election. This means that the Government have a mandate to deal with Brexit and other challenges that our country may face. The notion that the Opposition should be involved in the discussions with the United Kingdom is very peculiar. This is not something that the United Kingdom itself is doing. In other words, it is the UK Government is conducting negotiations with the European Union and not the UK Opposition or a combination of the two!

The Government has been meeting very well on Brexit issues with GSD MPs and the two Independent Members represented on the Brexit Select Committee. We intend to continue the positive relationship. There have been nine detailed briefings to Committee Members and two additional briefings to Mr Azopardi himself. However, in order to avoid duplicate briefings, it was agreed in January that he should, in turn, be briefed by the members of the GSD on the Committee.

It is therefore hugely ungenerous for Mr Azopardi to complain about these briefings and to suggest in the same breath that the GSD was more transparent at the time of Cordoba. It is important to recall that Mr Azopardi was even not in the GSD at the time of Cordoba which may explain why he probably does not know that the then Opposition was not briefed at all in any way by the then GSD Government.

In contrast, the GSD have been briefed in detail nine times so far in order to make sure that they have a full understanding of events as they unfold.



The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP said: "I would love to be able to tell the people of Gibraltar everything I have been told in confidence. Obviously, I cannot do so. If I did, I would break confidences and I would then not be privy to information that it is important for me and my Brexit team to have as we safely navigate this matter for Gibraltar. I have shared everything I can publicly with the people of Gibraltar. I have shared everything I can in confidence with the GSD and independent members of the Parliament. I have shared our objectives in principle in Brexit continuously. I would love to be able to say more. But I know that people are secure in the knowledge that the GSLP Liberals are not going to make any concessions on any aspect of sovereignty, jurisdiction and control. And people will be confident that our legal analysis on matters of European law will be bang on the money as it is the result of the work of Michael Llamas QC, the Attorney General, who has the greatest experience of EU law and the respect of the public in this respect. Mr Azopardi is trying to sow uncertainty even in respect of our legal analysis. He serves no one in Gibraltar or any part of our economy by doing this. If he wanted to help, he would not air this view publicly, he would keep private contact with us on this erroneous suggestion on his behalf. Frankly, it's clear that Mr Azopardi is serving just his political ego. It is the wrong time in our history for such indulgences."