



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 545/2018

Date: 17th September 2018

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### **El Pais Article Contains Material Errors**

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar notes the references in an article in El Pais today to 'bilateral' discussions between the UK and Spain in relation to Gibraltar.

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar can confirm that there is no separate bilateral process of dialogue between the United Kingdom and Spain in respect of Gibraltar in the context of Brexit or otherwise.

As the Government has repeatedly stated, and as the Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP announced in his Ministerial Statement in March, there is discrete contact ongoing between the UK, Gibraltar and Spain. The terms and format of those contacts do not offend any of the concerns any Gibraltarians would have about dialogue, although it is not presently in Gibraltar's interests to go into the detail of how those contacts have been effected.

Mr Picardo said: "We have long wanted to deal with any issues with Spain on which we have not been able to get traction since the Partido Popular abandoned the Trilateral Forum for Dialogue. Brexit has ironically allowed us to get the ball rolling on discussions which address many areas of concern we have had. Discussions have been ongoing even whilst the PP were in Government.

"In the Brexit context, a shared priority will be to give people certainty on the fluidity of the frontier, and there is much in these discussions which is positive and Brexit has ironically allowed us to get the ball rolling on issues which have been of concern to Gibraltarians. A Spanish willingness to construct a more positive relationship has been increasingly evident in recent months. We are making progress in many of these respects in a manner which will be good for Gibraltar if we are able to reach agreements. None of that will involve any agreements which are detrimental to Gibraltar's interests. Key aspects of the article in El Pais are factually incorrect, for example the references to detailed Ministerial exchanges by letter. What is true is that we are working on the inclusion of Gibraltar in the Withdrawal Agreement with some terms which are differentiated from the terms applicable to the rest of the United Kingdom as required by our geography and our current terms of membership of the European Union, exactly as we have already announced we are working to achieve."