



PRESS RELEASE

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HMGOG Welcomes UK spelling out Gibraltar sovereignty guarantees to EU and Spain

After the end of the European Council meeting early this afternoon, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the European Union, Ambassador Sir Tim Barrow, has written to the Secretaries General of the Council and Commission of the European Union.

Sir Tim's letters are the response of the United Kingdom to the letters from Donald Tusk, the President of the European Council, and Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, to Pedro Sanchez, the President of the Government of Spain.

The letters also respond to the statement contained in the minutes of the Council of today's date on the territorial scope of future agreements to be negotiated and entered into between the United Kingdom and the European Union after the UK has left the EU.

In its response, the United Kingdom has stated that it has no doubt over UK sovereignty of Gibraltar, including British Gibraltar Territorial Waters.

Additionally, the UK has specifically reminded the EU of the "double lock" on sovereignty to the effect that Gibraltar's sovereignty would never be transferred against the freely and democratically expressed wishes of the people of Gibraltar. The Ambassador also reminds the EU that the UK has given an additional assurance to the people of Gibraltar that it will not enter into a process of sovereignty negotiations with which Gibraltar is not content.

These timely reminders respond to the references to territorial integrity in the communications from the EU.

Sir Tim's letter then goes on to deal with the terms of the future negotiation by expressing in writing the position the Prime Minister, Theresa May, has repeatedly set out and which re-states the position he set out previously in an earlier letter to the EU yesterday.

Sir Tim specifically writes that, "the Government of the United Kingdom further restates that it will negotiate the future agreements implementing the Joint Political Declaration on behalf of all territories for whose external relations the United Kingdom is responsible, including Gibraltar, to ensure an appropriate and beneficial future relationship with the European Union, taking into account their existing relationships with the European Union."



Sir Tim ends by asking the Secretary General of the European Council, Mr Jeppe Tranholm-Mikkelsen, to transmit a copy to all members of the European Council, which includes the Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sanchez.

The Chief Minister of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "I am very happy to see this very specific statement by the United Kingdom Government in relation to the matters that have been raised by Spain in the last 72 hours. This communication from the UK directly counters and knocks on the head any idea that the United Kingdom might in any way have agreed any aspect of the statement from the EU27 about Gibraltar's future status. Additionally, the letter from the UK counters any kills dead any suggestion that the UK might have accepted any part of the Spanish attempt to exclude Gibraltar from the negotiations of the future UK/EU agreements. These letters set out the position of the United Kingdom clearly and unequivocally and they will be delivered to the Spanish Government. They put on the diplomatic record the position already clearly and unequivocally set out by the Prime Minister herself in all her public statements on the subject. On behalf of the people of Gibraltar I want to thank Mrs May for her stalwart and unflinching defence of Gibraltar, our British sovereignty and our economic interests. The Withdrawal Agreement she has achieved today protects all of those interests and is the best way for the United Kingdom and Gibraltar to leave behind us 46 years of membership of the European Union in a managed and orderly fashion. It also prepares the ground for a negotiation about the future relationship between the EU and the whole of the UK family. I look forward to those negotiations and to the work we will do with the UK in respect of trade deals to be done with the wider world, in particular the Commonwealth."