



Deputy Chief Minister

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Gibraltar makes huge contribution to Spanish economy - Deputy Chief Minister tells students

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia has told a group of students from Spain that Gibraltar is an engine for job creation and economic wealth for the entire neighbouring region.

Dr Garcia reminded those present of the large and positive contribution that Gibraltar makes to the economy of the whole region. He explained that 14,000 people live in Spain and work in Gibraltar, including some 8000 Spanish nationals. He went on to say that a Chamber of Commerce survey had shown that Gibraltar businesses purchased some £ 400 million a year from businesses in Spain, Gibraltar residents spent some £ 73 million in goods and services in Spain, and Gibraltarians with second homes in Spain contributed over £ 62 million a year to the Spanish economy.

The Deputy Chief Minister told those present that Gibraltar accounts for 25% of the GDP of the neighbouring region of Spain, and is the second largest employer for Andalucia after its regional Government. In this context he explained that it was in everybody's interests to make sure that there was continued frontier fluidity for persons and goods between Gibraltar and Spain once we were outside the European Union.

He outlined the different powers and competences of the institutions of Gibraltar and concluded that the elected Government boasted a very high degree of self-government compared to regional Governments in Europe and elsewhere. It was pejorative to describe Gibraltar as a colony. First because of this high level of self-government and secondly because the correct terminology in international law was non self-governing territory. Gibraltar would cease being such a territory through independence, free association, integration or by choosing a tailor made solution.

One thing is certain, he said, the future of Gibraltar will not be decided by the United Kingdom, by Spain, by the European Union or by the United Nations. It will be decided by the people of Gibraltar freely and democratically exercising their right to self-determination.

The Deputy Chief Minister thanked the students and their teachers for coming to Gibraltar to better understand the situation historically, culturally and geographically in the context of their English language studies.