



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Gibraltar and Malta explore common interests**

The Chief Minister Fabian Picardo and the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia arrived in Malta late on Wednesday evening for a series of high-level political contacts, which included a meeting with the Prime Minister Joseph Muscat.

There is a long and historic relationship between the people of Gibraltar and the people of Malta. One of the largest components in the formation of the Gibraltarian identity is precisely the Maltese element, something that is reflected in the high proportion of Maltese surnames that can be found in Gibraltar today.

Malta became British in 1800 and served as an important staging point in the days of the British Empire. Its vital role during the Second World War was recognised by the award of the George Cross in April 1942. Malta became independent in 1964. It is a member of the Commonwealth and of the European Union.

There is therefore a long tradition of shared values, heritage and history between Malta and Gibraltar. Mr Picardo and Dr Garcia touched on this during the meeting with Prime Minister Muscat. Mr Picardo had the opportunity to brief Mr Muscat on the latest developments following the outcome of the European Union referendum that took place in June. This included an explanation of the policy of the Government to explore every available option following the 96% vote to remain in the EU that was recorded in Gibraltar.

The Gibraltar delegation which, in addition to the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister, includes the Attorney General Michael Llamas and UK Representative Dominique Searle, also met the Minister for Foreign Affairs George Vella, the Minister for Finance Edward Scicluna and the Chairman of the Malta Financial Services Authority, Joe Bannister.

The Chief Minister Fabian Picardo said:

"I am very grateful to the Government of Malta who have extended every hospitality to me and my team. We have explored the development of commercial and economic links between Gibraltar and Malta. There is a long and historic relationship between our two nations which we want to progress further and which we trust will extend to all areas of commercial activity where mutual benefit can be established."

The Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister return to Gibraltar on Friday.