

PRESS RELEASE

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Chief Minister Hosts TUC Fringe Meeting

The Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, hosted a breakfast fringe meeting early today in Brighton in the margins of the Trade Union Congress 2016 Conference. The meeting was attended by Unite General Secretary, Len McCluskey, who introduced Mr Picardo to those attending.

Mr McCluskey addressed the meeting on the established presence of Unite in Gibraltar and the history of Trade Unionism in our Community. He praised Mr Picardo's work as a socialist leader and highlighted the excellent results of the Gibraltar economy and the low level of unemployment as an example of how socialist governments can deliver growth and create employment. Mr McCluskey referred to Gibraltar as a "socialist success story" in economic, social and progressive terms.

The Chief Minister gave the fringe meeting a detailed speech on the issues now facing Gibraltar as a result of the Brexit referendum decision. Mr Picardo dealt with issues relating to freedom of movement of persons and access to the single market, as well as the importance of the establishment of a free market between Gibraltar and the United Kingdom. The information provided reflected the statistics which show that the Spanish hinterland around Gibraltar benefits enormously from the commercial activity generated by and undertaken in and around Gibraltar and the fact that Gibraltar provides a quarter of the GDP of the Campo de Gibraltar.

Mr Picardo then answered questions from the meeting which was well attended by Senior Trade Unionists.

Representatives of Unite Gibraltar who are attending the annual TUC Conference were also present at the fringe. Those attending from Gibraltar were Victor Ochello (Unite Regional Officer for Gibraltar), Louis Gonzalez (Unite Gibraltar Chair), Marilyn Bramble (Unite UK Executive), Albert Hewitt, Frederick Martin and Christian Duo (Unite Convenors). Stuart Borastero, the President of the Gibraltar Teachers Association /NASUWT was also present to support the Gibraltar presentation.

Mr Picardo highlighted the work those present from Gibraltar had done, together with others, in the establishment of the Cross Frontier Group which had reached across to employers'



organisations and which brought together people from both sides of the frontier to defend the freedom of movement.

UK-based Gibraltarian Trade Union leader, Manuel Cortes of the TSSA Union attended to show his support also for the work being done in raising consciousness in the Trade Union movement of the challenges Gibraltar is facing as a result of Brexit and the aggression of the current, caretaker, Spanish administration arising from it.

Kevin Coyne, the United Nations Officer for Gibraltar summed up at the end of Mr Picardo's very well received intervention and question and answer session.

A number of action points have arisen as a result of the meeting to further progress Gibraltar's post-Brexit opportunities which will be pursued by the Chief Minister's Industrial Relations Officer, Michael Crome, who was also present at the meeting.