



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 723/2016

Date: 20th December 2016

---

### Opposition "Brexit" statements are misleading and contradictory

The Government regrets that the Opposition continue to play party politics with such an important matter for Gibraltar as is our planned departure from the European Union. The way in which the Opposition have behaved on this issue so far does not inspire any confidence whatsoever on their political judgement or on their ability to even comprehend the intricacies of what is happening.

The overriding objective of the Government is to protect and safeguard the economic stability of Gibraltar and the well-being of its people.

In their recent public statements, the Opposition have shown themselves to be opportunistic and contradictory in nature, often within the same statement or during the same interview. Their only objective seems to be to undermine the position of the Government even if this makes life more difficult for everybody else.

The first point to be made is that there will be one, single negotiation conducted by the United Kingdom Government. That single negotiation will take into account the information fed into the Department for Exiting the European Union by a number of different interested parties, including Gibraltar. The requirements of industry, of the Devolved Administrations, of London, of the Crown Dependencies, of the Overseas Territories and indeed of the United Kingdom Government itself are not the same. This means that there is scope for a multi-faceted and a differential approach. The UK Government itself acknowledges this.

The Opposition argue that we need to keep it simple. We are keeping it simple. However, no matter how simple we keep it, the truth is that this is a complex process which has to be handled in a tactful and delicate manner.

Indeed, it is the Opposition that continues to complicate matters either through ignorance of the facts or through sheer incompetence. They have argued that keeping it simple means that the Government should stick to securing a free border flow and single market access. Yet they ignore the fact that this is precisely what the Government has already been doing! There is nothing secret about this, nor do they need to be briefed on this specific matter because the Government have made countless public statements in this regard.

The Opposition then go on to generate further confusion through their misuse of the term "special status". They do not seem to have realised that even their own "keeping it simple"



solution of border flow and single market access is in itself a "special status", "a separate deal" or a differentiated solution. It is the substance and not the label that counts. Moreover, when they say "accept the UK deal", it is obvious that they have not even thought of the potential effect that it would have on import duty revenue if we had to join some form of Customs Union.

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia, who is responsible for work related to exiting the European Union, said:

"The whole of Gibraltar knows that the Government continues to leave no stone unturned in order to safeguard our position going forward. There have been a considerable number of positive meetings in London and in Brussels since the referendum of 23 June and these will continue into the New Year. The Opposition, for their part, can only continue with their policy of scaremongering and negative campaigning which will serve no useful purpose to anyone. We will continue to work closely with the British Government to deliver a deal that works for Gibraltar. We will avoid entering into unnecessary partisan exchanges with the Opposition as we do that work for all of Gibraltar."