



Deputy Chief Minister

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Garcia discusses Brexit referendum with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

A hectic programme of thirty engagements and meetings in two days for the Deputy Chief Minister, Dr Joseph Garcia, in Brussels ended with a call on the British representation to the European Union, UKREP, and a meeting with the UK Deputy Permanent Representative, Shan Morgan.

Earlier, the Deputy Chief Minister also took the opportunity of the visit to Brussels to meet with the representative offices of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In three separate meetings, Dr Garcia discussed the coming referendum on whether the United Kingdom should remain in the European Union or should leave. It was very useful to learn more about how each of the offices operate in Brussels and to better understand the referendum from the perspective of the three devolved administrations.

Dr Garcia was able to update the EU Commissioner for Migration and Border Management, Dimitris Avramopoulos, on the latest developments at the Gibraltar-Spain land frontier. This follows the three inspection visits to the border by a European Commission monitoring team the last of which was in October 2015. The visits resulted in a series of recommendations to Gibraltar and to Spain which were designed to improve border fluidity. Dr Garcia made the point that the border is still not working as well as it should with intermittent disproportionate delays.

Whilst Dr Garcia was involved in meetings at the European Parliament, the European Commission and at Gibraltar House, the Gibraltar exhibition stand hosted a steady stream of visitors. On the stand's busiest day, it was very useful that two students, Paul Patron and Tammy Randall, joined the Gibraltar delegation on the stand to distribute leaflets and to engage with visitors who wanted to know more about Gibraltar. Paul is studying at the College of Europe in Bruges and Tammy is on a one year language placement in Brussels from a UK University.

Commenting on the visit, the Deputy Chief Minister, Dr Joseph Garcia, said:

"It has been a very intense visit and a very productive one. I am very grateful to Sir Graham Watson, the Brussels Office and my team who made everything come together very well. A total of thirty meetings and media engagements have taken place over the two days. This included



meetings with thirteen MEPs representing five different parliamentary groups and ten different countries. A number of meetings with different European Commission offices also took place.

The timing of the visit proved to be particularly relevant coming straight after the conclusion of the Prime Minister's negotiation with the European Union. This generated considerable interest about Gibraltar, which was reflected in the number of people who visited the exhibition stand in the European Parliament".