



No: 253/2019

Date: 4th April 2019

Government in Detailed Brexit Talks with UK

A team of senior officials from the United Kingdom has been in Gibraltar this week in order to continue the close cooperation between the UK and Gibraltar Governments as we prepare to leave the European Union. This comes against the background of the fluid developments in the United Kingdom Parliament which makes it difficult to predict the outcome.

Two days of meetings have taken place in Gibraltar. The first session on Tuesday, which was chaired by the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia, centred on details of Brexit contingency planning.

The second session on Wednesday, which lasted more than five hours, was chaired by the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo. This covered wider areas including a discussion on the future relationship between the UK, Gibraltar and the European Union.

The Gibraltar team included Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia, Chief Secretary Darren Grech, Attorney General Michael Llamas and Financial Secretary Albert Mena. The UK team included representatives of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Treasury.

These talks are precisely an opportunity for Gibraltar to explain how we see our future relationship with the European Union and are a continuation of a process in which the two Governments have been embarked upon for some time.

This will continue next week with a meeting in London of the Joint Ministerial Council between the UK and Gibraltar Governments. The Gibraltar Brexit team will then hold meetings with different UK Government departments as the future relationship is being scoped out.

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

“It is important to understand that the process of departing the European Union is divided into two parts because the EU refused to negotiate the future while the UK is still a Member State.

“The first part ended successfully for Gibraltar with our inclusion in the Withdrawal Agreement and, more importantly, in its transitional phase. This means that in the event of the Withdrawal Agreement being approved by the UK Parliament and the European Parliament, then everything will largely stay the way it is until the end of 2020. This approval will then open the door to the start of the negotiation of the Future Relationship.



“The debate in the UK Parliament is largely about the future after the UK has left, with different options being discussed and voted upon. However, the UK still has to leave the EU before those negotiations can commence. The only options on the table at the moment for that departure are the Withdrawal Agreement or a No Deal Brexit. The former is in the best interests of all involved including in the best interests of Gibraltar.

“There is also discussion of an extension beyond 12 April which might require that the UK and Gibraltar participate in elections to the European Parliament. The Government intends to take urgent legislation to Parliament in order to provide for these elections in case this possibility becomes a reality.

“Needless to say, the preferred option of the Gibraltar Government remains a revocation of Article 50 with both the UK and Gibraltar remaining in the European Union.”