



HM Government of Gibraltar

Deputy Chief Minister

PRESS RELEASE

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Gibraltar students to visit London instead of Brussels

The Government has decided that this year Gibraltar students will visit the UK and Commonwealth institutions in London instead of the EU institutions in Brussels. This was revealed this morning to the combined upper forms of Bayside and Westside Comprehensive Schools by the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia.

Dr Garcia was invited to a presentation to their peers by the group of students who attended the educational visit to Brussels last year. They held meetings at the EU institutions, the College of Europe and NATO headquarters.

He said afterwards that the Government provided a number of educational opportunities for young people abroad. This included a year at the College of Europe, three months internships in Washington and a week-long visit to Brussels. The first such visit to the EU took place in 2014.

The Deputy Chief Minister explained that against the background of a fluid Brexit which envisaged that UK MEPs would end their mandate on exit day, it made sense to wait for the dust to settle and to organise an educational visit elsewhere this year. It was important that the present cohort of students were given the same opportunity as their predecessors and the UK and Commonwealth institutions based in London were the logical alternative.

He also took the opportunity to tell the students that the decision taken by the UK to leave the European Union would have a profound effect on all our lives. He went over the work that had been done between the 2016 referendum and the conclusion of the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement in November 2018. This included meetings with the Member States of the European Union, including Spain, with the European Parliament and the European Commission. There had also been meetings with the Devolved Administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with the Crown Dependencies and with the other UK Overseas Territories. The working relationship with the UK Government and with the main Opposition parties in the UK Parliament was extremely good, he told the students.



However, the EU had taken the side of Ireland and the side of Spain when it comes to Northern Ireland and to Gibraltar. This was to be expected given that Spain was staying and the UK was leaving. He said that the infamous Clause 24 of the negotiating guidelines, the exchange of letters in November and the recent pejorative reference to Gibraltar as a colony were all indications of this. He issued a stark warning that we could expect more of the same in the future.

The Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia said:

“The Government is very grateful to the students for being excellent ambassadors for Gibraltar, to their schools and teachers as well as to Mr Albert Danino and Mr Ivan Navas who are the direct organisers of the visits. It is a pity that we need to refocus the trip for this year but it makes sense to do so in the context of our EU departure. I am certain that the educational value of a visit to the UK Parliament and to Commonwealth institutions based in London will be equally appreciated by those who are selected to attend. The Government will continue to provide worthwhile experiences of this nature for our young people.”