

**CHIEF MINISTER'S ADDRESS  
GIBRALTAR DAY IN LONDON 2018, FINANCIAL SERVICES LUNCH**

Ministers, Friends,

Welcome to our Gibraltar Day in London.

Today we remind ourselves of the strong and enduring links between the City of London and the Gibraltar Financial Services community.

It's a relationship that has stood the test of time.

And the work we have done the past 28 months since the Referendum has been designed to ensure that those links continue to endure.

Our partnership with HMG has never been stronger.

Our aspirations for the future have never been more determined.

And our Brexit position has never been more secure.

This afternoon, the Prime Minister is expected to report to Parliament that – working together – the UK and Gibraltar have developed a Protocol with the European Union in relation to Gibraltar.

This Protocol will form an important part of the Withdrawal Agreement that we no doubt all hope will shortly be finalised for an orderly withdrawal by the UK from the EU.

And in that context, we have worked hand in glove with Mrs May and her Brexit team to put Gibraltar in a position where we were not the last rock on the road to a Brexit agreement, but the first building block of such an agreement.

That's a nice turn of phrase.

Remarkably, it is one first coined by the current Foreign Secretary of Spain, Joseph Borrell and repeated by Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

And it is the position that now prevails.

In fact, it is common sense that has prevailed.

A disorderly Brexit would not have been in the interest of Spain, the United Kingdom, Europe or Gibraltar.

There are, today, 14,000 cross-frontier workers in the Gibraltar economy whose future rights would be secured by the application of the Withdrawal Agreement to Gibraltar.

As will the rights of all citizens whose rights in the transition period will be entirely unaffected and identical to those they enjoy today.

So long, of course, as there is a Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and the EU.

In fact, we have also already been able to largely agree practical arrangements with the Spanish Government in respect of cooperation on environmental, police and customs matters.

And in agreeing those principles we have, of course, not compromised on our sovereignty, jurisdiction or control in any way.

We never would.

But we also continue to work with Spain on finalising memorandums in respect of areas of cooperation on other matters including arrangements related to the resolution of conflicts in respect of tax residence of corporates and individuals.

I am keen to continue our work to try to reach agreements in these areas.

By doing so, we will be able to show, even in Spain, the legitimacy of our market in this respect.

Because we are committed to compliance with EU and International standards.

Indeed, we already enjoy exchange of information agreements with over one hundred countries around the world!

And our good faith has not been extinguished or dimmed by the positive progress reported on the Gibraltar Protocol between the UK and the EU.

And neither has our economic growth been dimmed by Brexit.

Indeed, Gibraltar is something of an economic success story.

Net debt stands at just 15% of GDP at £ 325m.

GDP growth of has averaged just shy of 10% in the past 7 years.

Last year, GDP growth was 8.6%.

That delivers a GDP per capita which is the third highest in the world, just ahead of Luxembourg.

And our GDP will hit our election target of £2.4 Billion well ahead of March 2020.

Not bad for a Southern European economy!

In fact, our unemployment rate is probably the lowest in the world.

We have only 45 individuals registered as seeking employment at the end of the last quarter!

And that is in a jurisdiction that provides 20% of all motor insurance policies sold in the United Kingdom.

A jurisdiction which takes 70% of all online bets taken in UK.

A jurisdiction that is guaranteed continued access to the UK market after we have left the EU.

The terms of that access, based on the highest regulatory standards and client protection, is something on which we are already working closely together with HMT and relevant regulators.

Work which really is ongoing in partnership.

The tasks we set ourselves 28 months ago have all been met in your areas:

- the continued reciprocal single market in financial services with the UK is a given. This will include insurance, banking, investment and e-money services which will continue regardless of whether an implementation period is agreed in the EU negotiations or otherwise.

- continued access to the UK market place in Gambling and an enhanced and strengthened relationship between the UK and Gibraltar Gambling Commissions.
- And continuing to work in promoting our existing and new areas of business. The excellent work of Albert Isola, our regulator, the GFSC and Gibraltar industry operators in the DLT/Blockchain space is a perfect example of this. Our first licensee, COINFLOOR is a regulated firm here in London.

And with levels of confidence in our community that were unimaginable 24 months ago.

The property market, a good barometer of market confidence is strong.

Some 550 units are in construction to be delivered within the next 24 months, and some 850 further units are in the pipeline.

And these are all in the private sector.

Well over 1,000 other affordable homes in the subsidised public sector will be announced before the end of this calendar year.

That is why today, I am especially proud to be here with you to tell you of the continued growth in Gibraltar.

Because Gibraltar has a great story to tell in London today.

Because Gibraltar is now ready to leave the European Union without causing any unnecessary disruption to our financial services operators.

Because Gibraltar remains strong, despite the challenges we face as we navigate Brexit together.

Gibraltar is open and ready to service and grow your business.

We are ready to look beyond Brexit together.

Thank you.

And it is now my pleasure to introduce Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Robert Jenrick MP who joins us today at this event.

ENDS