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## **GIBRALTAR WANTS SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT IN BREXIT TREATY**

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Although Article 50, launching the Brexit procedure, is yet to be triggered, Gibraltar has already embarked on an effort to convince the EU that the territory needs a special arrangement in the EU-UK divorce deal.

Speaking at a public event organised by the consultancy APCO yesterday (12 October), Fabian R. Picardo, the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, highlighted the pro-EU credentials of the 32,000 citizens living in the small overseas UK territory.

Picardo, a Labour politician, stressed that 96% of the Gibraltarians voted to remain in the EU in the 23 June Brexit referendum. The turnout was 84%.

This is the sort of result you may not garner in any exercise of democracy in the world, other than under the barrel of a Kalashnikov, he said, amid laughs. He added that this result was obtained principally because the people of Gibraltar were, are and will continue to be enthusiastic supporters of the European project.

A precedent

Picardo explained that back in 1972, the year when he was born and when Gibraltar negotiated its terms of access with the UK into the European community, this resulted in specific arrangements for the territory in the UK accession treaty.

At the time Gibraltar was almost an island, as the Spanish dictator General Franco had closed the land border with Spain since 1969. And the biggest investor in the territory was the British military.

Back in those days, Gibraltar chose to have a special status with the European Community and decided to join parts of it where relevant. For example, the 2.5 square-mile rock doesn't have any agriculture, so it didn't become part of the CAP. Conversely, Gibraltar maintained its position as an important trading post and didn't join the free movement of goods, but the three other freedoms were applied.

**SPAIN STEPS UP EFFORTS TO SHARE CONTROL OF GIBRALTAR AFTER BREXIT**

Spain has submitted a proposal to the UN that would see it share sovereignty over Gibraltar with the UK, as the Iberian nation continues to put its card on the table regarding Brexit. EurActiv Spain reports.

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Border story

In 1982, under the Socialist government of Felipe Gonzalez, Spain opened the Gibraltar border to pedestrians, and in 1984 the border was fully open. According to Picardo, this transformed the Gibraltar economy: the military dockyard closed and investments from the ministry of defence went down from 60% of the economy to less than 2%.

Picardo said Gibraltarians saw different levels of engagement with the EU, and became a little bit sceptical over the EU executives hesitations over the 2013 dispute with Spain about an artificial reef created in British Gibraltar territorial waters. The dispute resulted in major difficulties in crossing the Gibraltar-Spain border.

#### GIBRALTAR MINISTER BIDS TO CALM ROCKY DISPUTE

British overseas territory Gibraltar could open its waters to Spanish fishermen again by October, its chief minister was cited as saying on Friday (23 August), offering a chance that the dispute with Spain - which lays claim to the rocky outpost - might be nearing resolution.

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He said that nowadays 12,000 people cross the frontier between Spain and Gibraltar every day to work in the territory. Unlike the UK, he said Gibraltar does not consider those workers dirty immigration, but essential access to the workforce that keeps our economy going.

Picardo indicated that Gibraltar had made the choice in 1972 of not joining the freedom of goods, but could reconsider that.

A mutually beneficial deal will off course involve the people of Gibraltar having a say in the future. It must, because if it doesnt, then you are imposing the will of Spain on the people of Gibraltar, he said.

The territorys constitution specifically says the UK has responsibility for external relations, but that doesnt include EU matters, which remain under the local government.

We accept the four freedoms

So when Gibraltar comes to the table through the United Kingdom, what Gibraltar will say is: we accept the four freedoms.

And in view of its particular situation, Gibraltar wants this to continue. We dont want a deal where we are left out of immigration and we are included in access to the single market.

Why must I choose between my British identity and my desire to form part of the EU project? In the context of the UK membership, there is already a different level of participation. We are not in goods [not part of the freedom of movement for goods]. Why not in the context of the UKs

departure, cant we have a different deal going forward?

Picardo said the answer was simple. A solution good for Europe can include Gibraltar to participate in those areas without calling itself a member, in the same way as Andorra, Lichtenstein, San Marino and other territories.

Karel Lannoo , the Chief Executive Officer of the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), reacted by saying that the views of the Chief Minister were rather utopian, and that either the UK would keep the four freedoms, or Gibraltar would suffer the consequences.

#### SPAIN SUGGEST JOINT SOVEREIGNTY OVER GIBRALTAR IN CASE OF BREXIT

Spains foreign minister today (7 June) revived the idea of sharing sovereignty over Gibraltar with Britain if Brexit happens, saying it would allow the Rock to maintain access to the European Union.

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