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Sir William Cash MP
Chair of the European Scrutiny Committee
House of Commons
London
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12 March 2024

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter of 8 March. I want to provide reassurance that the Government's position with respect to Gibraltar has not changed: we will not agree to anything that compromises sovereignty.

We continue to work side-by-side with the Government of Gibraltar and will only agree to terms that the Government of Gibraltar are content with. I was in Gibraltar yesterday and met the Chief and Deputy Chief Ministers to discuss progress.

I know that the Chief Minister has appeared before the Committee and has offered to do so again. I am of course also happy to appear before the Committee to update you on the negotiations, and I hope that our teams can find a suitable date in the near future.

In the meantime, I am happy to outline our position on the three issues raised in your letter. As previously shared with the Committee, we are seeking a mobility arrangement with the Schengen Area to safeguard Gibraltar's prosperity. This arrangement would remove checks from the Gibraltar-Spain border to allow for the fluid movement of people. In line with the December 2020 Political Framework, those travelling to Gibraltar will undergo both Gibraltar immigration controls and Schengen entry checks.

The Political Framework notes that there will be level playing field provisions in the Treaty to agree mutual standards on matters such as labour, environment, and taxation. These are normal elements of trade agreements. In line with what the UK agreed with the EU under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement in this area, commitments should be bilateral and reciprocal and not based on the rules of either party.

We are prepared to explore practical and technical options to facilitate flights between Gibraltar and the EU. The UK will only agree to terms that the Government of Gibraltar are content with and will not agree to anything that compromises sovereignty. The UK is clear on the need to respect UK sovereignty and the operational autonomy of the military facilities in Gibraltar.

I hope that this letter provides reassurance that the Government's commitment to Gibraltar is as strong as ever.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Leo Docherty', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Leo Docherty MP
Minister for Europe