

European Scrutiny Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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From: Sir William Cash CH MP

13 March 2024

Leo Docherty MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Europe)
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UK/EU Gibraltar negotiations

Dear Leo

Thank you for your letter dated yesterday, 12 March.

I must express my frustration that this issue was the subject of an Urgent Question on Monday and that you did not make yourself available to appear before my Committee on Tuesday. I trust you understand that I did not take applying for an Urgent Question lightly. Given the progress you have indicated is being made towards a UK/EU agreement on Gibraltar, we are keen on your attendance before the Committee as a matter of urgency. We appreciate Mr Picardo's offer to appear before us but the UK Government is yet to account to us for its negotiations, including what its current approach could mean for the entire UK family.

I am afraid the UK Government's red lines on Gibraltar negotiations are not clear. On Monday, Minister Rutley did not rule out a Schengen border on Gibraltar, alignment with EU rules there (which are not 'normal elements of trade agreements'), or joint UK/Spain management of the airport. The latter of which could not accurately be described as either a practical or technical change to its current operation. I should also add that the airport was not initially considered to be within scope of these negotiations. I hope I have made these points clear and you do not believe them to be cryptic.¹ We are happy to further explain these concerns to you in evidence.

Regards

CHAIR

¹ Gibraltar Chronicle, '[Negotiators 'pushing' for treaty 'palpably in everyone's interests'](#)', Docherty says' (11 March 2024)