

Government response: Negotiations on the future relationship: territorial scope

The final provisions to the Withdrawal Agreement record the UK and the EU's commitment to negotiate in good faith and conclude agreements envisaged by the Political Declaration on their future relationship within a certain time frame. The UK's Permanent Representative has sent a letter to the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union setting out the UK's interpretation of Article 184 of the Withdrawal Agreement, which is that it imposes no obligations regarding the territorial scope of future agreements. The letter also makes clear that the UK will negotiate future agreements on behalf of all territories for whose external relations it is responsible.

A UK Government spokesperson said:

"The Prime Minister has been absolutely clear that we stand behind British sovereignty for Gibraltar and that we will get a deal on the future that works for the whole UK family.

"For the withdrawal negotiations, given there are some circumstances which are specific to Gibraltar, we held talks with Spain which directly involved the Government of Gibraltar. These were constructive and we look forward to taking the same approach to the future relationship."

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar has issued the following statement:

"Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar welcomes the unwavering commitment of the United Kingdom that it will negotiate future trade and other arrangements with the EU that work for all of the British family of nations, including Gibraltar.

The deep and unbreakable bonds that bind the United Kingdom and Gibraltar together have not in any way, and will not be in any way, be diluted as a result of our common departure from the EU.

Brexit will have no effect on the British sovereignty of Gibraltar and the waters that surround it.

Gibraltar is leaving the EU at the same time as the United Kingdom, despite having voted overwhelmingly to remain, because it is our relationship with Britain that guarantees our security, prosperity and the certainty of the rule of law.

The Chief Minister of Gibraltar of her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar, the Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: 'Throughout our history we've stuck with

Britain. After Brexit, we will stick with Britain in the future too. This is our most important relationship. And as the UK establishes new trading relationships around the world, we look forward to the opportunities that will come from the benefits of our common language, our common law and the ties that bind us with the Commonwealth of nations around the world.'"