

# Labour's unequivocal pledge to Gibraltar – Emily Thornberry meets Chief Minister Picardo during a two day visit to the territory

## Labour's unequivocal pledge to Gibraltar

A future Labour government will guarantee the continued sovereignty of Gibraltar and make its future economic prosperity a priority during the Brexit negotiations. Labour's pledge to Gibraltar came at the end of a two-day visit to the territory by Shadow Foreign Secretary Emily Thornberry.

Ms Thornberry met with Gibraltar's Chief Minister Fabian Picardo, Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia, and other members of parliament. She toured the air terminal and frontier area, and attended the Workers Memorial Day service at the Alameda Gardens. She also met with representatives of Gibraltar's workforce to discuss their views on the post-Brexit economy.

Speaking after her meetings, Emily Thornberry said:

"I have been delighted to spend this time with Chief Minister Picardo, members of his Cabinet, and representatives of Gibraltar's workforce. Ahead of the General Election in June, I have reinforced to all of them that the Labour Party remains unequivocally committed to protecting the sovereignty of Gibraltar and the right of its people to self-determination.

"We are also determined to protect Gibraltar's economy and ensure that its government can continue to create jobs and prosperity in the years to come. Under a Labour government, those principles will never be subject to compromise, bargaining or trade – whether in the Brexit negotiations or beyond – but will instead remain as solid as the Rock itself.

"I also reassured the Chief Minister that – along with London, the devolved administrations, and other overseas territories – Labour will ensure that Gibraltar is closely consulted throughout those Brexit negotiations, so that together we can safeguard economic growth in every region and territory, and get the best possible deal for all British citizens.

"Britain's overseas territories are a fundamental part of our national history and Labour will always stand up for the rights, interests and self-determination of their citizens, whether that means protecting the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands against anyone who would seek to challenge it, or supporting the right of the Chagos Islanders to return to their homelands in Diego Garcia."

Chief Minister Picardo welcomed Ms Thornberry's visit, saying:

"It has been a pleasure to welcome Emily to Gibraltar. She is a good friend

and a defender of Gibraltar in Parliament in her role as Shadow Foreign Secretary. Her visit, even during this election period, demonstrates her deep commitment and that of her party, to the people of Gibraltar and our right to determine our own future.”

Ends

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## [Labour is calling on Theresa May to come out of hiding and face the public](#)

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Jeremy Corbyn has been campaigning across the country at public events, meeting people to find out their concerns and hopes.

In contrast, the Prime Minister has emerged only for heavily stage-managed soundbites to the cameras before running into hiding again.

At a staged event at a community centre in Leeds last night, party workers and activists were shipped in and staff and the public were excluded.

May continues to refuse to debate Jeremy Corbyn in live TV debates despite overwhelming demand from the voters.

Speaking at Labour’s HQ this morning, Jeremy Corbyn said:

“Theresa May is hiding from the public; she won’t take part in TV debates and she won’t talk to voters. Refusing to debate Labour in this election isn’t a sign of strength, it’s a sign of weakness.

“In showing contempt for the public in this way, the Prime Minister is showing that it’s Labour that stands up for the many, while she speaks only for the few.

“What is she afraid of? Voters deserve to know what political parties are offering.

“We are setting out our plans to rebuild and transform Britain, with a government for the many, not the few.”

Ends

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## [42/2017 : 27 July 2017 – Opinion of the Advocate General in the case C-186/16](#)

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## [41/2017 : 27 April 2017 – Opinions of the Advocate General in joined cases C-168/16, C-169/16, C-169/16](#)

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## [New guidelines help citizens gain better and fairer access to their national courts on environmental cases](#)

Today the European Commission adopted a [guidance document](#) on access to justice in environmental matters which clarifies how **individuals and associations** can challenge decisions, acts and omissions by public authorities related to EU environmental law before national courts.

The Juncker Commission has taken a step forward with the publication of these guidelines, providing the necessary guidance to citizens for better access to national justice systems. The guidance is intended to help individuals and non-governmental organisations to decide whether to bring a case before national courts. National courts can use it to help identify all the EU Court of Justice cases that they should take into account when they are faced with questions related to access to justice in environmental cases. With this guidance, national administrations are made aware of possible shortcomings in their justice systems and businesses are provided with greater clarity on what EU rights and obligations are at stake in the decisions, acts and omissions that concern them.

Frans **Timmermans**, First Vice-President responsible for the Rule of Law said: *“Legal certainty is a core principle for a Rule of Law based society, and it is important that we offer this guidance to all interested parties. Environmental law is at the forefront of our efforts to build a sustainable*

*future for the EU, and everybody needs to have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities.”*

Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, said: *“Environmental laws are about protecting people and their health. When public authorities fail to respect the rights and obligations under these laws, the public can hold them accountable. The new guidance is an important step in empowering citizens to take matters such as the quality of air, water and waste management in their own hands. By bringing environmental cases to the national courts, citizens can help ensure the correct application of environmental law across the EU.”*

The EU Court of Justice has issued a number of rulings clarifying EU requirements on access to justice in environmental matters. Examples include:

- How national courts should address pleas that municipal **air quality plans** do not provide for sufficiently effective measures to reach the air quality standards laid down in EU air legislation;
- The role of the public, notably environmental non-governmental organisations, in helping to ensure that the obligations under EU **nature** legislation are respected in the Member States;
- Assessment criteria that national courts should employ to avoid that prohibitively high litigation **costs** prevent citizens and associations from exercising their role in upholding EU environmental law at national level.

Today’s guidance note brings all of these rulings together in a single text, making it easier for people to understand them and their implications by providing one comprehensive document.

The adoption of today’s guidance note will be followed by discussions with Member States which do not yet fully comply with their obligations, as interpreted by the EU Court of Justice. These discussions will also take place in the context of the process established through the [Environmental Implementation Review](#).

## **Background**

Access to justice guarantees that individuals and environmental associations, under certain conditions, can have an independent national court examine whether a public authority acted lawfully in making a decision, act or omission affecting their rights. The principle guarantees consist of the right to be heard, a sufficient scrutiny by the national judge, measures to put matters right and measures to avoid prohibitive costs.

The guidance document is based on access to justice provisions in EU secondary environmental law and provisions of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters ([The Aarhus Convention](#)), as interpreted by the EU Court of Justice. The scope of the guidance document is limited to access to justice in relation to decisions, acts and omissions by public authorities of the Member States. It does not address environmental litigation between

private parties. Nor does it concern the judicial review of acts of the EU institutions.

**For More Information**

Factsheet: [Access to Justice in Environmental matters](#)

Info Sheet: [Environmental enforcement – What’s in it for you?](#)