

Press release: David Lidington in Madrid for positive talks on UK-Spain relationship post-Brexit

The Minister for the Cabinet Office David Lidington MP visited Madrid today, where he met the Spanish Foreign Secretary Alfonso Dastis to talk about the deep bilateral relationship between the UK and Spain and to reiterate the UK's commitment to forge even greater ties after the UK leaves the European Union.

The Ministers discussed the practical implications of the UK's departure, including for Gibraltar where the priority remains to provide certainty to the thousands of people and businesses affected. Mr Lidington reiterated that the UK is confident that by engaging in regular conversations with the Government of Gibraltar and our EU partners – including Spain – we will find a way forward that benefits everyone living and working in the region.

The discussion also covered current foreign policy issues including Russia, the Iran nuclear deal, and the situation in Venezuela. The two Ministers recognised that the people of Spain and the UK have close ties, and that the two nations are major partners in trade. Mr Lidington underlined that the British Government is committed to maintaining existing levels of close cooperation in the future and said that we will also continue to work together to keep our citizens safe.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, David Lidington said:

Today I had a constructive meeting with Spanish Foreign Secretary Alfonso Dastis. The UK and Spain are friends and allies with a long history together, and we are looking forward to tightening those bonds even further.

We have made significant progress in our negotiations to leave the EU so far, and we are confident that we can find a way forward together that is to the benefit and shared prosperity of both ourselves and the European Union.

We want to be ambitious about the future relationship with the EU we are seeking, in both our economic and security partnerships. I am convinced that with our shared goodwill, creativity and focus, we will overcome the challenges ahead.

The United Kingdom and Spain are close partners in NATO and United Nations, among numerous international organisations, and the commercial relationship between both countries rose to 43 billion pounds in 2016. Nearly 19 million British tourists visited Spain in 2017 and around 300,000 British people are

residents, while almost 200,000 Spanish people live in the UK.