

Gill was pleased to see that smuggling apparently has been eliminated. He also shares the Gibraltarians' concern about the Amsterdam Treaty in so far that protocols X and Y affects them.

He thought that the EU citizens resident on the Rock had a strong case for being allowed to vote in the European elections; if no other way can be found then their votes must be merged with a constituency in the Mother Country.

Although supportive of the Gibraltarians' aspirations to be allowed a vote in the eventual referendum about the single currency in practical terms it would only have a marginal effect on Gibraltar business. At present it looks as if Spain will enter the single currency at the earliest opportunity whereas the United Kingdom will not. So in the first wave Gibraltar will remain in the sterling area whilst the Spanish currency will be the Euro. No doubt Gibraltar will trade in both sterling and the Euro.

Christopher Gill thought that post the eventual Constitutional Conference all the possible options should be put in a referendum to the Gibraltarians. This could even include the unspoken but perhaps thought about option of retaining the status quo. The Gibraltar government obviously would campaign hard for its preferred option which is a political judgement. If this is rejected by the electorate then it is a political fact of life however unpalatable to the government. The decisions in the recent Scottish and Welsh referenda might have not been those advocated by the Blair government. But this is months away. The immediate objective must be to present the Gibraltar government's proposals to the Foreign Secretary before he gets overwhelmed by the pressures of the presidency of the European Union for the first six months of 1998.

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