

**Speech**

**Europe Day**

**Gibraltar**

**Audience: HMGoG plus dignitaries and business people from all across Gibraltar.**

**Duration 15 Mins 1500 words**

**Structure & Key Point**

## Main Block 1 Europe

**I am delighted to be able to share Europe Day here with you.**

**Like so many parts of Europe, Gibraltar has witnessed some of the most damaging conflicts of the last century.**

**Conflicts that ripped our continent apart inflicting misery on an almost unimaginable scale.**

**But since those early steps in the 1940s and 1950s that were to give birth to the European Union our generations have been spared conflict of that scale.**

**This year, we commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the First World War.**

**Next month, HM the Queen will mark the D Day landings of 1944, the start of the liberation of Europe.**

**It behoves us all to reflect that 70 years on, those countries sheltered within the framework of the EU are enjoying the longest period of peace and security in generations.**

**500 Million people leaving and trading in peace.**

**28 countries working together to further democracy.**

**Countries that were once in mortal conflict – now working together to resolve differences and work for the common good of the economy, security and the environment.**

**We now have generations of people who have been spared the suffering of conflict and who would find the idea of EU states in armed conflict unthinkable.**

**And yet, despite its crucial role in delivering peace and stability Europe and its institutions have come in for a great deal of adverse comment.**

**Some of the criticisms are probably justified.**

**It can and should be more flexible, more open and more democratic.**

**Such is the head of steam that we are seeing the rise of anti EU Parties in many countries of Europe.**

**But I can't think of a better day than Europe Day to make the positive case for Europe.**

**In terms of peace,**

**In terms of stability,**

**And – even with some of the recent difficulties in its economies – it has delivered prosperity for millions of its citizens.**

**That's why I believe that membership of the EU is fundamentally in the British national interest, as well as the interests of Gibraltar.**

## Main Block 2 The Special Place of Gibraltar

**I'm told that 60 years ago to the day, HM the Queen visited Gibraltar.**

**I am delighted to be able to follow in her footsteps and convey to you the very best wishes and whole hearted support of the British Government.**

**On this special day, I re-iterate the Government's firm commitment that we will respect your wishes on the question of sovereignty. The UK will never pass sovereignty over Gibraltar to another State against your wishes. And we will not enter into any process of sovereignty negotiations with which you are not content. Never.**

**I know that your relationship with Spain is a difficult one. And I am glad to have had the opportunity to come and hear first hand what impact that has.**

**So, on this Europe Day, I ask everyone involved to think of the basic principles that underpin the European movement, particularly the free movement of people across internal borders.**

**We are working hard to promote those principles and Gibraltar's right to enjoy their fruits. And we will continue to do so.**

**I'm particularly pleased to be here to witness the Queen's baton arrive and be taken around all the key areas of this wonderful place.**

**The Commonwealth is yet another shining example of how peoples and nations can work together for the greater good.**

**Celebrating their differences, but working together for mutual good.**

**And at this point, I'd like to reflect on that wider philosophical point.**

## Main Block 3 Scotland and separatism and the role of Lib Dems

**We are in an era shaped by two opposing forces in regard to how nations view the future and work together.**

**There are those that seek to put barriers up between peoples.**

**Who advocate narrow nationalism and withdrawal from bonds with others.**

**And there are those that understand in a fast moving and uncertain world it is better to work in close harmony with other nations.**

**As a Liberal I have an internationalist outlook.**

**Narrow nationalism puts barriers up, liberalism tears them down.**

**I'm sure you're all aware of the impending referendum that will decide the future of Scotland, my home nation.**

**The four nations of the United Kingdom form one of history's most enduring unions.**

**And one of its most successful too.**

**Successful in terms of prosperity.**

**Successful in terms of security.**

**Successful in terms of culture and friendship.**

**The body of evidence building up in favour of Scotland remaining in the UK is becoming ever greater.**

**If Scotland leaves the UK, it will destabilise businesses and costs jobs.**

**It will be a 'one way' ticket.**



**There will not be a currency union with the remaining UK.**

**And it's worth emphasising on Europe Day that an independent Scotland will face enormous problems in any attempt to re-join the EU.**

**And even in the event that it did secure membership it will certainly not be on the terms currently enjoyed as part of the UK. Scotland's net contributions would rise by between £1.9bn and £3.8bn over the next 7 years. Outside of the UK we'd pay more and get less.**

**Important though the numbers are, I know that many people in Scotland will make up their minds on something more.**

**It will be about that emotional attachment to the other nations in our family of nations.**

**In much the same way that I sense you feel about being British and part of our extended family of peoples.**

**The reality is that we are better together in so many meanings of those words.**

**For me, I'm a Highlander and a Scot. I'm British and European.**

**For you, you're Gibraltarian, British and European.**

**And as such should enjoy the free movement across borders as other EU citizens do and be free of any pressure in business, trade or travel from another member state.**

**But the EU isn't perfect.**

**It needs MEPs who go to the parliament and fight for their local area.**

**I understand that Sir Graham Watson is referred to by many here as Mr Gibraltar, such is his unstinting work for your community.**

**Unfortunately, Graham can't be with you today but I can tell you in his absence that he is a fearsome advocate for your interests.**

**I know that Graham has been involved in a multitude of issues but one in particular caught my eye.**

**I understand that he played a leading role in securing Gibraltar's successful bid to become a full member of UEFA.**

**And I've heard that you're now in the same group in the next tournament as Scotland.**

**You'd better not beat us!**

**I very much hope that the people of Gibraltar will help return him as your MEP together with Lyana Armstrong-Emery whom I'm delighted to say is here with us today.**

**I am aware that there are a number of issues that need attention between HMGoG and the UK Government.**

**I can assure you that these matters are receiving attention.**

## **Conclusion**

**I am absolutely delighted to have been able to share this important day with you.**

**You are a remarkable community in a remarkable place with a remarkable history.**

**You can be assured that the Govt remain totally committed to your right of self determination, and on Europe Day, to your right to enjoy the benefits of our membership of the European Union.**

**We stand – we will always stand – shoulder to shoulder with you.**

**Ends**