

Talks held on Gibraltar's future

Two days of talks on the future of Gibraltar begin at Jack Straw's country residence later on Wednesday.

Officials at the two-day summit at the foreign secretary's official Kent house, Chevening, will plan a new forum on the Rock's future. In October, Mr Straw and his Spanish counterpart Miguel Moratinos agreed to establish a body that would give Gibraltarians a voice in their future. Most Gibraltarians said in a referendum they wanted to remain British.

Gibraltar's Chief Minister Peter Caruana will represent the British citizens living on the Rock, while Britain's Europe Director Dominick Chilcott will represent the UK. Madrid is being represented by Spain's director general for Europe, Jose Maria Pons. The initiative follows Spain's socialist government's decision to put its long-standing sovereignty ambitions on hold. Gibraltarians rejected plans for the Rock's sovereignty to be shared between Britain and Spain in a referendum organised by Gibraltar government.