

FREE MOVEMENT BETWEEN GIBRALTAR AND SPAIN

A historic transformation of the frontier between Gibraltar and Spain has taken place at the land border. Under a landmark post-Brexit treaty between the UK and the EU, the physical border fence—traditionally known as "La Verja" in Spain has been completely dismantled and this morning at midnight the crossing was fully open to pedestrians and vehicles.



Picture credit: GBC Television

The physical checkpoints and routine passport controls at the land crossing are officially removed, ushering in a new era of fluid, Schengen-style free movement. For decades, this frontier has been a source of daily commuting friction. Now, the estimated 15,000 Spanish workers and thousands of tourists who cross daily can do so without queues or barriers.

To safeguard the EU's outer perimeter without choking the land border, Schengen checks have shifted. Joint Spanish and Gibraltarian authorities will instead co-manage entry points at Gibraltar's airport and seaport. While British sovereignty over the Rock remains fully intact, the removal of the fence marks a massive milestone for regional integration and economic cooperation.

A large number of people on foot, and in vehicles took the opportunity to cross freely after midnight.

June 8, 1969. the Gibraltar border was closed by General Francisco Franco in one of the most intense chapters of modern European history. What started as

diplomatic friction escalated into a strict 13-year physical and economic blockade designed to force the British territory into submission.

December 15, 1982 there was a partial opening when the newly elected democratic government of Felipe González in Spain opened the gates exclusively for Spanish and Gibraltarian pedestrians.

February 5, 1985 The border fully reopened to all vehicles and nationalities. This was largely driven by Spain's ambition to join the European Economic Community (EEC, now the EU).

Subsequently the movement of pedestrians and vehicles at the frontier was often restricted for political reasons by Spain, and when the UK left the EU under the Brexit agreement there was some uncertainty about how it would operate, as Spain was a member of Schengen.

July 15, 2026 The current opening is implemented by a complicated 1000 page treaty between the EU and the UK which has been negotiated over a long period. The **UK-EU Treaty on Gibraltar** formally signed on **July 14, 2026**, in Brussels—is a historic agreement. It ends nearly a decade of post-Brexit limbo for the British Overseas Territory by fundamentally redefining its physical and economic relationship with Spain and the wider European Union.