

FINE WEATHER SET TO CONTINUE, FORECAST: Inside

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SNP leader scolds “arrogant” Britain: See Inside

Majorca sets course for a record cruising year: Page 3

Britain and Spain working together to improve public services

- British government gives lessons on how to save money.

Madrid.—British minister for reform Francis Maude visited Spain last week to discuss issues around public sector reform, and look at ways that Spain can learn from Britain's experience of delivering an ambitious efficiency agenda.

Over the last year, a number of visits between Spanish and British officials have looked to strengthen relations between the two countries on this shared agenda, including a visit by Deputy Secretary of the Spanish Prime Minister's Office, Jaime Pérez Renovales, to learn about the British Government's efforts to both modernise and increase efficiency in the UK's public administration.

On 10 February, it was HMG's turn to visit Madrid, with Minister for the Cabinet Office Francis Maude attending an international conference on public administration reform hosted by the Spanish Deputy Prime Minister, Soraya Saenz de Santamaría, to present Spain's 'non-stop' programme to representatives from a number of European governments.

Building on the well-established relationship between the Spanish Government and the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude showcased the UK's initiatives to reform the public administration, comparing the UK experience with his counterparts. Driven by the key principles of

efficiency and innovation, the Minister explained the UK's determination to make public services better while saving hard working taxpayers' money and reducing the deficit.

The Minister's no-nonsense approach has had tangible results. Last year the UK Government saved taxpayers £10 billion, with £500 million alone saved by stopping projects not aligned to IT spending controls. Reviewing, renegotiating and opening up public contracts to small businesses has also had a huge impact: 'one great example of the potential from small businesses was when we retendered a hosting contract. The incumbent big sup-

plier bid £4 million; a UK-based small business offered to do it for £60,000. We saved taxpayers 98.5%' the Minister explained. Digitalising public services is also a key part of the UK's long term economic plan. The Government has committed to make 25 services fully digital, from registering to vote to applying for a visa, in a bid to 'make life better for citizens and businesses and change the way people think about how government works.' And the resulting savings are indisputable. The cost of digital transactions is 20 times lower than over the phone, 30 times lower than by post and 50 times lower than face-to-face.



A warm farewell to the Bay Entertainers in Majorca: See Page Eighteen

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