

Six in 10 Spanish support tough stance on Gibraltar

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- **More than six in 10 Spaniards back the government's new tough stance against Gibraltar, while nearly half would favour closing Spanish airspace to flights to and from the British territory, a poll has shown.**

Of those surveyed, 62.8 per cent said Spain's current pressure was "good" or "very good", according to the poll by the Real Instituto Elcano think tank.

Madrid disputes Britain's three centuries of sovereignty over Gibraltar, a territory on the southern tip of Spain which measures just 62.6 square miles and is home to about 30,000 people.

The latest tensions between Madrid and London over the outpost began in July after Gibraltar boats dumped blocks of concrete into the sea near the territory. Gibraltar said it was creating an artificial reef that would foster fish populations.

Spain said the reef would block its fishing boats and introduced stringent border checks which it said are needed to stop smuggling, creating waits of several hours for motorists trying to enter the tiny territory.

Last month Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo, Spain's foreign minister, said the country was mulling a 50-euro fee to enter or leave Gibraltar, tax investigations of thousands of Gibraltarians who own property in Spain and the closure of its airspace to planes heading to or leaving the airport in the British outpost.

By AFP