

# News story: Culture Secretary reaffirms UK commitment to strong Italian cultural relationship

Karen Bradley has met senior Italian politicians to celebrate the special cultural relationship between our two countries and commit to building new creative partnerships in the coming years.

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport visited Venice and Rome to support the UK-Italy Partners for Culture 2017 programme, celebrating arts, science, education and creative industries, which was established following the G7 Ministerial meeting on culture in Florence that she attended in March.

During her meeting with Italian Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism Dario Franceschini, the Culture Secretary championed the commitment of Italy and the UK to the protection of cultural heritage in areas of armed conflict.

The UK recently [ratified the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property](#) in the Event of Armed Conflict and acceded to its two Protocols. These will come into force in the UK on 12 December.

As a result, the Ministry of Defence is establishing an armed forces cultural property protection group and has recently met Italy's dedicated Carabinieri cultural protection unit, which has been deployed to both Iraq and Kosovo.

The UK Armed Forces is set to build on the relationship through joint training, exchanges, and potential joint overseas training missions and disaster relief.

Karen Bradley, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

Italy and the UK are world leaders in international cultural protection and the ongoing cooperation between our two nations in this area is a perfect example of the depth of our ties.

We have a strong connection too through art, culture and sport, all of which is deeply ingrained in both our countries and we are committed to strengthening our relationship further with Italy in the years ahead.

The Culture Secretary visited the Venice Biennale – one of the world's foremost arts festivals – where she viewed the work of British artists at the British and Diaspora Pavilions.

The British Council has managed the UK's participation in the Biennale since 1938, showcasing British artistic talent to the world and building new international creative partnerships.

In Rome she joined Sir Ciarán Devane, Maria Balshaw, director of Tate, and Giovanna Melandri, President of MAXXI Foundation and others in a discussion on women, leadership and the creative industries.