

News story: UK and Iceland sign agreement on defence and security cooperation

UK Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, and his Icelandic counterpart, Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson, today signed an MoU between the UK and the Republic of Iceland to enhance defence and security cooperation between two founding members of NATO.

The signing of the MoU represents a significant step forward in the process of formalising the already positive bilateral relationship the UK and Iceland have, recognising the two countries' shared interests, values and responsibilities. Through NATO, the UK participates in military exercises in Iceland, including during Trident Juncture in 2018 and Dynamic Mongoose in 2017, and Iceland also contributes to the UK-led NATO enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Estonia, seeking to protect our allies from external security threats.

The MoU will provide both the UK and Iceland with a means for developing and furthering their defence relations, and will help to enhance security cooperation in new areas such as policing, counter-terrorism, search and rescue, risk and crisis management, and cyber security. This builds on recent cooperation, including a visit in January by members of the Icelandic National Security Council (NSC) to meet UK NSC counterparts, and ongoing cyber cooperation between the Oxford Cyber Centre and the relevant Icelandic authorities.

RAF Typhoons will conduct NATO Air Policing from Iceland later this year for the first time, patrolling Iceland's airspace and helping to guard NATO's northern flank. This demonstrates the benefits of our bilateral defence and security relationship to wider European and North Atlantic security.