

News story: UK offers deep security partnership with EU post-Brexit in the face of growing global threats

The UK Government has offered to contribute military assets to EU operations, cooperate on sanctions and agree joint positions on foreign policy as part of a deep security partnership with the EU after Brexit.

In a renewed demonstration of the UK's commitment to European security, the latest future partnership paper signals the Government's willingness to partner with the EU in the face of ever-growing global threats.

It makes clear the UK will seek to use our assets, capabilities and influence to combat the shared challenges facing the continent -- including illegal migration, terrorism, cyber and state-based threats and amounts to a security partnership 'that is deeper than any other third country and that reflects our shared interest'.

There is a significant amount of collaboration between the UK and EU on defence, security and development.

The paper lays out how Britain will want to build a new partnership with the EU that goes beyond existing third country arrangements, and reflects our shared interests and values of upholding democracy and protecting peace across Europe and the world.

Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union David Davis said:

After we leave the European Union we will continue to face shared threats to our security, our shared values and our way of life. It's in our mutual interest to work closely with the EU and its member states to challenge terrorism and extremism, illegal migration, cyber-crime, and conventional state-based military aggression.

Today's paper highlights Britain's world class diplomacy and defence capabilities, our leading contribution to international development, and our desire to continue to use these as part of a deep and special partnership with the EU.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

As we leave the EU, the UK's commitment to European security is undiminished. We will pursue a global foreign policy, and continue to work in partnership with our neighbours to promote peace, democracy and security in our continent and across the world.

In recent years, the European Union has helped achieve crucial foreign policy goals – from bringing Iran to the negotiating table, to uniting in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine. We want this EU role to continue after we leave.

This is why, in addition to stronger relations with EU member states, we also envisage a strong UK-EU partnership on foreign and defence policy following our departure. This will allow us to continue our work in tackling the shared challenges we face worldwide.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

At a time of increased threats and international instability the UK remains unwavering in its commitment to uphold European security. With the largest defence budget in Europe, the largest Navy British troops and planes deployed across land, air and sea in Europe, our role in the continent's defence has never been more vital.

As we leave the EU, the UK and our European allies will ensure a close partnership that meets these shared challenges head-on.

The paper highlights the UK's successful military cooperation with the EU on tackling piracy off the Horn of Africa, to joint defence projects with the EU – including the Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft.

The UK has the largest defence budget in Europe, and is the only European country that meets both the NATO target of spending 2 per cent of GDP on defence, with 20 per cent of this on equipment, and the UN target of spending 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) on international development.

The UK has also committed to invest at least 50 per cent of development spend in fragile states and regions. The UK and France are the two European permanent members of the UN Security Council and the only European countries with an independent nuclear deterrent, while UK proscriptions and asset freezes are the basis of many of the EU sanctions on terrorist organisations.