

News story: UK steps up commitment to European security

Speaking at the NATO Defence Ministerial in Brussels, Gavin Williamson will commit four RAF Typhoons to the Southern Air Policing mission in Romania next summer. Following a successful rotation last summer, the fast jets will be redeployed to the country, working with our Romanian allies to police the Black Sea skies.

Marking a further commitment to Europe, the Defence Secretary will announce that the UK is stepping up in the Western Balkans. In addition to the troops already based in Kosovo, supporting peace in the country, and our contribution to the EU's Op Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from next year a Battalion will be held at high readiness to respond to any situation in the region. This will see 600 soldiers ready to move into the region at short notice.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

In the face of an increasingly assertive Russia, the UK has significantly stepped up its commitment to Europe and today I can confirm a further package of support, showing how we remain at the forefront on European security.

We are standing by our allies across air; deploying Typhoons to Southern Air Policing in Romania, land; increasing our support to the Kosovo peacekeeping operation, and sea; with HMS Ocean returning to the NATO Standing Maritime Group.

The Defence Secretary will also welcome the return of HMS Ocean to one of NATO's Standing Maritime groups, following its redeployment to the Caribbean to help in the hurricane recovery.