

News story: Britain and Italy stand together to tackle security threats

In meetings with his counterpart Roberta Pinotti, Sir Michael Fallon said Britain was a key ally of Italy and would not be stepping back from European defence and security commitments following the Brexit vote.

They reviewed their partnership within the NATO alliance in particular. After the UK has spearheaded NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force this year, Italy will take on the responsibility in 2018.

The UK and Italy are also working closely to tackle illegal mass migration. The Defence Secretary confirmed the UK is considering providing more training to Libya's Coastguard as part of support to Operation Sophia, which focuses on tackling human smugglers and arms traffickers who endanger the lives of migrants seeking travel to Europe.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

In leading NATO's high readiness force and tackling illegal migration in the Mediterranean, Britain stands together with Italy to tackle threats to our security.

The Royal Navy has played a key role in training the Libyan Coastguard and we're now looking at extending this training alongside Italy and other European partners.

A small team of specialist Royal Navy personnel successfully trained members of the Coastguard before Christmas in the southern Mediterranean. They were taught search and rescue techniques and how to sail alongside, board and inspect vessels.

The purpose of the training, led by the Italians, is to increase Libya's ability to secure its own borders by increasing their Coastguard's ability to disrupt people smuggling and illegal arms trafficking in and around Libya.

Elsewhere, the UK has also supported NATO counter migration efforts in the Aegean Sea, and HMS Mersey recently returned home following six months supporting this task, contributing to nearly twelve months of Royal Navy presence in the Aegean. She will now undertake maritime security operations around the UK, maintaining the integrity of home waters.

Sir Michael added:

NATO is the cornerstone of our Defence, and the UK remains committed to European security, working with Italy and our European friends to tackle threats.



Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon today met with his Italian counterpart Roberta Pinotti. Picture: Ministero della Difesa Italiana – Ufficio Pubblica Informazione.

The Defence Secretary and Defence Minister Pinotti also discussed the development of the UK – Italian Defence industrial relationship, and potential trade options in the future. Sir Michael extended an invitation to host his Italian counterpart in the UK.

Sir Michael also recognised Italy's contribution to peace operations around the world and domestically, including support to disaster relief operations after earthquakes and heavy snowfall.

- HMS Echo continues to spearhead the UK's role in Operation Sophia, and Royal Navy ships have rescued more than 15,000 of the 32,000 lives saved since operations in the Mediterranean began.
 - Echo has already rescued nearly 2,000 people and was involved in a rescue incident as recently as last week, when more than 500 migrants were saved.
 - Royal Navy vessels have destroyed more than 140 smuggler vessels, and in addition to Echo, several other ships have been involved: HMS Enterprise, HMS Bulwark, HMS Diamond, HMS Richmond and RFA Mounts Bay.
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News story: Thousands of students will benefit from new cadet units backed by £50 million Government plan

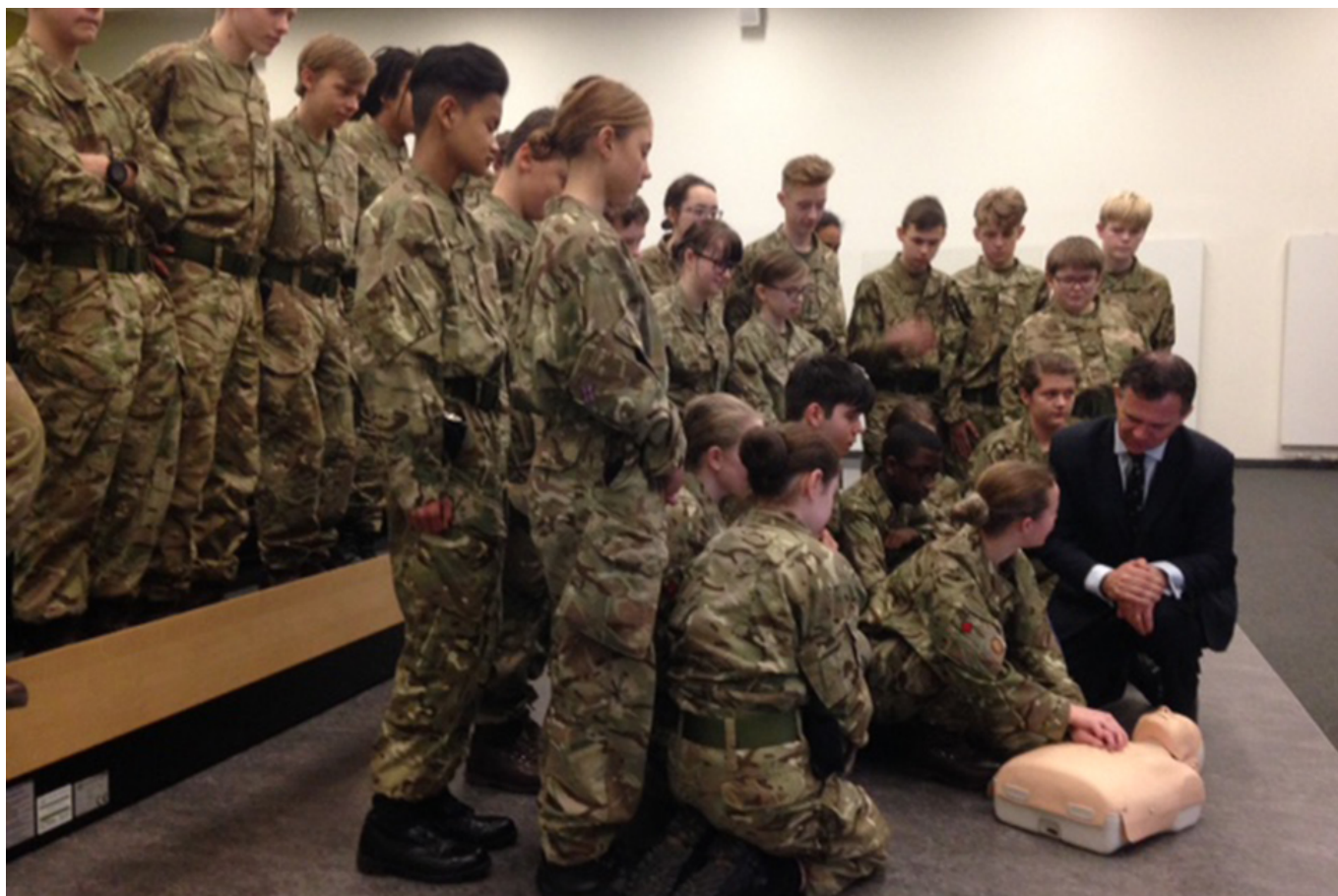
Thousands of students, many often from less prosperous areas, are set to benefit from the development prospects and new skills, such as team-work, problem solving and leadership that school cadet units bring. These will be opened in areas where previously opportunities such as this were limited.

This new wave of cadet units follows an [announcement last year by Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon on another 25](#), as the government remains on target to have a total of 500 running in UK schools by 2020. The CEP is backed by £50 million funding from LIBOR fines, which pays for set up costs, the students' uniforms, equipment and training.

Speaking at Brompton Academy today, Defence Minister Mark Lancaster, said:

These new units help deliver on the Government's manifesto commitment that more students should be able to enjoy the rewards of joining the cadets from every background.

Cadet Forces offer a fantastic opportunity for students, providing exciting new opportunities and helping to instil the positive values of citizenship, responsibility and fairness.



Defence Minister Mark Lancaster meets Army Cadets at Brompton Academy as he announces 25 schools to create new cadet units. Crown copyright.

Cadet units, provide challenging and enjoyable activities for students, offering them the opportunity to learn new skills, engage in adventurous activities, and help them gain vocational BTEC qualifications. Schools also recognise the benefits, with a number of Head Teachers saying that having cadets as students improves attendance and classroom behavior and research has shown an increase in academic achievement, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Learn more about the [Cadet Expansion Programme here](#).

The Schools that will be setting up new Cadet units are:

- Ash Manor School- Surrey
- Aston University Engineering Academy- West Midlands
- Barr Beacon School- West Midlands
- Boldon School- Tyne and Wear
- Cookstown High School- County Tyrone, Northern Ireland
- Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy- Kent
- Hayesfield Girls School- Somerset
- Isle of Portland Aldridge Community Academy- Dorset
- Knole Academy- Sevenoaks, Kent
- Maxwelltown High School- Lochside Rd, Dumfries
- Northbrook College- West Sussex
- Ron Dearing UTC- Hull
- Shenfield High School- Essex

- Sirius Academy West- Hull
 - St Antony's Catholic College- Greater Manchester
 - The Dean Academy- Gloucestershire
 - The Hawthorne's Free School- Merseyside
 - The International School – West Midlands
 - The John Warner School – Hertfordshire
 - The Phoenix Collegiate- West Midlands
 - The Priory City of Lincoln Academy- Lincolnshire
 - The Priory Ruskin Academy- Lincolnshire
 - The Priory Witham Academy- Lincolnshire
 - The Victory Academy- Kent
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[News story: Defence Secretary praises 'good partners' Croatia during visit](#)

Sir Michael Fallon welcomed Croatia's Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Damir Krstičević to sign an agreement aimed at developing existing security and Defence relations.

At the Ministry of Defence in London today they discussed Britain's bilateral relationship and explored ways the UK can work together with Croatia on joint activities.

The Defence agreement focuses on developing the UK-Croatian Defence relationship including focus on: existing joint operations to support stability, peace and security; effective deployments together on future international operations; and further opportunities and benefits for defence procurement and equipment support.

By signing the agreement the Defence Secretary has also confirmed the UK will hold annual Defence talks with Croatia, which will be held at policy director level.

This year Croatia is contributing to the NATO high readiness force which the UK is leading, by providing a platoon of Military Police and a Civil Military Co-operation Team. Croatia will also contribute to the German Enhanced Forward Presence in Lithuania.

Croatia has around 100 troops deployed on operations in Afghanistan, where 500 UK personnel are based in Kabul to provide officer training and wider assistance and advice.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Croatia is a good partner of the UK with our Armed Forces' serving

together within NATO in Afghanistan and in Europe. The UK will continue to play a leading role in NATO and I welcome Croatia's commitment to the high-readiness force that we are heading this year.



Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon and Croatia's Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Damir Krstičević signed a Defence agreement during the visit. Crown Copyright.

During their meeting the ministers also discussed the Defence Secretary's meeting with Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic in October and HMS Defender's visit to the port of Split last June.

The UK enjoys good relations with several states in southern and south eastern Europe. In September the Defence Secretary visited Bulgaria and Albania as part of his regional engagement, and last month met UK personnel providing training to the Armed Forces in Ukraine.

[News story: MMO calls for feedback on](#)

marine planning

A [questionnaire](#) on the first outputs of marine planning in the north east, north west, south east and south west has been launched.

The questionnaire, which is open until Friday 31 March 2017, asks for feedback on the recently published Issues Database, supporting evidence, proposed draft policies to date as well as a new [interactive format](#).

It's the first opportunity for stakeholders to see how marine planning is progressing in north east, north west, south east and south west marine plan areas, marking an important milestone in the marine planning process.

The questionnaire is part of an eight week programme of activity, which also includes a [series of workshops](#).

The questionnaire and workshops are an opportunity to see how the issues and evidence gathered last year are being taken forward, and how proposed draft policies for the areas are being developed.

A new [proposed format](#) for marine plans is also introduced, which takes a shorter, more digital, interactive approach, linking directly to our Marine Information System (MIS).

Steve Brooker, Chief Planning Officer said:

"We encourage everyone who uses the marine area to complete this short questionnaire.

"Marine plans will shape how we all – from developers to local residents – interact with the marine area over the next 20 years, and so it's important that everyone has the opportunity to take part in their development.

"The questionnaire and workshops mark the end of the first year of marine planning in the north east, north west, south east and south west, and we welcome feedback on how our work is progressing."

To take part in the questionnaire visit [our consultation website](#).

To sign up for a marine planning workshop, visit one of our Eventbrite pages:

- [north east marine plan area workshops](#)
 - [north west marine plan area workshops](#)
 - [south east marine plan area workshops](#)
 - [south west marine plan area workshops](#)
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News story: Social hub takes shape at Worthy Down

The new building, which is part of a £250 million tri-service facility that DIO is building at Worthy Down in Hampshire, includes four bars, a large dining room, kitchens, recreational, food court and shopping facilities. The internal fit out of the CRL will now start. Once up and running the CRL will be the social hub for the Junior Ranks'. It will be a central meeting place and leisure facility for permanent staff and visiting students. The CRL is one of 26 buildings that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) is delivering with our main contractor, Skanska. The 26 buildings we're providing are a mix of technical training and classroom facilities and accommodation.

Peter Riches, DIO Project Manager for the project, said:

DIO supports service personnel by providing a fit-for-purpose estate and accommodation so we're pleased to be working with Skanska to deliver these facilities. The CRL will provide students from the college with a first class, modern leisure and recreational facility that should make their overall experience of the college a pleasant one.

Paul Weale, Project Director for Skanska, said:

We're pleased that the CRL facility meets both the military and DIO's expectations, in terms of its function and quality. This building has been created through strong collaboration between the DIO and Skanska and will meet the needs of personnel from all three services for many years to come.

Once complete, the DCPLA site at Worthy Down will enable the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to train personnel more effectively and efficiently to deliver the best possible support for military operations. Locating the tri-services' training to one site will support centralised training and provide better resources. In addition, military personnel will have the opportunity to share best practice and knowledge to deliver the individual training requirements. Savings will be delivered through economies of scale, shared resources, technology and the disposal of selected sites.

Brigadier Steve Shirley, who will be in charge of the college when it opens, said:

The CRL building will provide both our students and staff with a modern meeting place where they can enjoy much-earned recreational

time. The facilities are superb. I am very proud to be leading on such a prominent project that will bring modern, multi-purpose facilities to Worthy Down.

The college will provide specialist training facilities and modern accommodation for up to 1,500 students, designed in a series of 'villages'; one for Junior Ranks, one for Officers and one for Senior Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCOs). Trainees and permanent staff will have access to sports and recreation facilities, Officer and SNCO Messes, including supporting amenities. The Royal Logistics Corps Museum will also relocate to Worthy Down into a purpose built exhibition space, which will be available for soldiers, families and community use.