

# UK establishes permanent military training team in Western Balkans

News story

UK Ambassador Rachel Galloway signed an agreement to set up the Western Balkans Land Regional Coordination Cell in North Macedonia to coordinate UK training in the region



UK Ambassador Rachel Galloway and the Defence Minister for North Macedonia Radmila Shekerinska shake hands after signing the agreement

The UK has set up a permanent military team in North Macedonia, marking a new level of defence cooperation with partners in the Western Balkans.

An agreement was signed today in the Skopje, North Macedonia, by UK Ambassador Rachel Galloway and the Defence Minister for North Macedonia Radmila Shekerinska, establishing a Western Balkans Land Regional Coordination Cell.

The cell will involve a small military team coordinating and channelling UK training into the region. This will focus UK capacity-building efforts and enhance cooperation between UK and partner forces in the region. It will also improve the coordination of partnered military training and enable the UK to better understand and support the training requirements of our defence partners.

The cell will be based in North Macedonia, NATO's newest ally which joined in March 2020, and will support them and other regional NATO partners in meeting capability targets associated with NATO membership.

**Armed Forces Minister James Heappey said:**

The agreement signed today underlines the UK's commitment to enhancing cooperation with our partners in the Western Balkans and takes our defence relationship with our friends there to a new

level.

We look forward to working closer than ever to ensure security in this important region.

One function of the newly established permanent cell will be to coordinate UK support to North Macedonia in the delivery of a light Infantry Battalion at readiness for NATO operations next year.

The recently published Defence Command Paper outlined that in an age of global and systemic competition, our Armed Forces will be persistently globally engaged with partners around the world. The paper also stated the UK's commitment to working closely with partners in the Western Balkans to maintain and promote regional and international peace and security, demonstrated by a recent visit to Montenegro by Minister of State for Defence Baroness Goldie. The Western Balkans Land Regional Coordination Cell will support UK Defence in realising this ambition.

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## [Pop-up campsites to check their flood risk say Environment Agency](#)

Press release

Farmers and landowners setting up temporary campsites for the summer holidays are being urged to have a flood plan in place to keep campers safe.



Campsites can be particularly vulnerable to flooding

Farmers and landowners setting up temporary campsites for the summer holidays are being urged to have a flood plan in place to keep campers safe.

Flooding can happen very quickly bringing a significant risk to life and campsites can be particularly vulnerable. Taking steps to prepare for flooding, and knowing what to do in a flood, can significantly reduce risk to life. It can also reduce damages to a business.

**The Environment Agency is advising all campsite owners to:**

**Ben Thornely, Environment Agency Area Flood Risk Manager for Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire said:**

We urge all campsite owners to be aware of their responsibilities and to check their flood risk, owners should consider flood risk as seriously as fire risk.

Flash floods can happen at any time of year. In some areas, some of the most severe flooding has happened during the summer months.

Last August (2020) Storm Ellen and then Storm Francis both hit in the summer holiday season bringing heavy rain.

Owners can find more information on how to prepare for flooding, what to do during and after a flood and how to prepare a site [flood plan](#).

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## [Have questions about Defence Innovation Loans? Talk to our experts](#)

News story

Your chance to speak to the DASA Team behind Defence Innovation Loans



If you are undecided on Defence Innovation Loans, or want to learn more, we have the thing for you. A virtual event called [Defence Innovation Loans: Your questions answered](#). We want to answer all of your burning questions, so we are inviting you to talk directly to the experts.

## **What will be covered in the event?**

- What DASA does and how Defence Innovation Loans work
- Who can apply – is your business and innovation eligible ?
- What you can borrow – amounts and eligible cost
- Understanding the project and loan periods and terms – an explanation of the costs and how the loan works
- How to apply – including top tips
- Q&A

**Date and time: 3 August 2021, 11:00 – 11:40 BST**

[Click here to register!](#)

Don't miss out! This is your chance to ask the experts everything you need to know about defence Innovation Loans so you can quickly commercialise your defence product.

## **Why Defence innovation Loans?**

- Loans of up to £1.6m for SMEs
- You can apply for a loan between £250,000 and £1.6 million.
- Below market interest rate of 7.4%
- Accessible to SMEs, and with a below market interest rate of 7.4% per annum
- Focused on commercialising your innovation
- Your innovation must be mature at TRL 6 or above, to ensure the solution can be commercialised within the time scale of the Innovation Loan.

For more on Defence Innovation Loans, watch the videos below:

### **Defence Innovation Loans: An introduction**

[Defence Innovation Loans: An introduction](#)

### **Defence Innovation Loans: Everything you need to know**

[Defence Innovation Loans: Everything you need to know](#)

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# MOD reminds public to stay safe on the Defence Training estate during the summer holidays

School's out, the summer holidays are here, and with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions more people may decide to explore MOD training areas with their friends and family.

The 'Respect the Range' campaign led by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) is encouraging people who use military training areas for recreational activities to stay safe and be aware of the potential dangers.

The campaign, which is targeting Salisbury Plain and Aldershot before being rolled out further, aims to raise the public's awareness and understanding of the very real risks to personal safety when using military land.

Much of the Defence training estate is open to the public and offers people the opportunity to get outside and enjoy nature. The MOD welcomes visitors to accessible areas of its estate but encourages them to always use the land safely and in line with MOD guidance and byelaws.

The summer holidays also mean that people may be tempted to use the MOD training estate for outdoor activities like camping and picnics, which are not allowed.

BBQs, campfires, wild camping and picnics are not permitted anywhere on the Defence training estate. The military train at all times of the day and night and the land must remain clear for vehicles and Service personnel. Campfires and BBQs pose the additional risk of causing wildfires, which not only put lives at risk, but also damage important flora and fauna.

In recent years, training estate staff have reported an increase in visitors straying from public footpaths and rights of way on military training areas, endangering their own lives as well as those who are with them, including children and pets. This can also put Service personnel at risk and interrupt vital training exercises, impacting on the Armed Forces' ability to prepare to deploy in real-life situations.

Brigadier Jonathan Bartholomew, DIO's Head of Overseas Region and the Defence Training Estate, said:

The Defence training estate offers many exciting opportunities to explore some of the most beautiful, unique and rural areas in the UK. We encourage the public to enjoy the land but also to be aware of the dangers associated with it.

The Defence Training estate are shared spaces that the military use all year round, they can go from calm to combat in an instant, so

it is important to be aware of the dangers involved when visiting them.

We want everyone to have a safe and enjoyable summer, so we are reminding visitors always to check training times before travelling, stick to public rights of way and observe safety information including red flags, signs and byelaws to help protect themselves and others.

For more information on accessing the training estate safely, visit the GOV.UK site on [Accessing the training estate safely](#) or [view our video](#)

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## [UK and France sign new security treaty to protect passengers on Channel ferries](#)

- Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab and Home Secretary Priti Patel have agreed a new maritime security treaty between the UK and France.
- This new treaty strengthens UK security by fully equipping law enforcement and emergency responders to respond to terrorist incidents, no matter where they occur.
- The Foreign and Defence Secretaries are in Paris today for discussions on security issues with their French counterparts.

UK emergency responders will have more power to deal with terrorist incidents in the Channel thanks to a new treaty which the Foreign Secretary signed in Paris today. The UK-France Maritime Security Treaty, negotiated between the UK Home Office and French Secrétariat général de la Défense et de la Sécurité nationale, is the foundation for seamless joint and coordinated action to be taken by UK and French forces in response to an incident, such as a terrorist attack on board a ferry or other large vessel in the Channel.

The Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, said:

As close allies it is vital the UK and France work together to protect our citizens and values.

Today's signing of the UK-France Maritime Security Treaty will reinforce our ability to jointly respond swiftly and effectively to terrorist threats in the Channel.

Home Secretary, Priti Patel, said:

As Home Secretary, the protection of the public and our citizens is paramount. The intelligence and security tools this new cooperation provides will give law enforcement and our emergency responders the additional support they need to protect us all. In an uncertain world we must continue to work effectively with international partners to prevent and disable serious security threats.

The Treaty includes provisions which will enable the UK and France to:

- share security information concerning potential security threats,
- mount swifter and stronger initial responses to serious security incidents,
- coordinate more efficient joint responses, and
- cooperate more effectively in the aftermath of an attack or incident.

The treaty enables joint intervention by UK and French security forces to work side by side to keep people safe.

The treaty will take effect following formal ratification by both countries and is designed to mitigate against a high threat security incident on a ferry or other large vessel in the Channel. It is not intended to tackle illegal migration, for which other initiatives and agreements are either in place, or in development.

Today in Paris the Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary met their French counterparts for joint discussions. The meeting covered key security and foreign policy issues including new fields of co-operation on emerging technologies, European security, security in Africa and the Levant, and our joint work concerning China, Russia, Iran, Afghanistan and the Indo Pacific.

The Foreign Secretary also held discussions with Jean-Yves Le Drian, the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs on the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, our collaboration to combat COVID-19, including travel policy and vaccine exports, ongoing work to tackle small boat crossings in the Channel, climate and COP26, and Libya.