



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Joint Declaration by the Defence Ministers of the United Kingdom and Estonia

Introduction

The UK and Estonia are committed to build on an already close defence relationship, so that together – as well as with our Allies and partners – we will be better placed to meet the 21st Century's security challenges, increasing threats, and secure our common security needs and interests.

We have strong foundations on which to do so. As fellow north and north-western Europeans, we share the same values and interests; we share the same resolve to uphold the rules-based international order; and we have a shared determination to stand-up to Russian aggression, wherever it occurs and in all its forms. In doing so, we have the benefit of two armed forces with a long history of working alongside each other: on Maritime and Land deployments with NATO, through Baltic Air Policing, the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and our enduring collaboration on NATO's Forward Land Forces in Estonia, for which the UK is the Framework Nation.

Reinforcing Euro-Atlantic Security

A deteriorating security environment and an increasingly multi-polar and contested world – all exacerbated by Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine – demands a unified response. As staunch Allies, the UK and Estonia reiterate our unshakeable commitment to NATO as the bedrock of security in the Euro-Atlantic area and of our national and collective defence. We recognise the need to strengthen the European contribution to the NATO endeavour. Our governments have both pledged to spend 2.5% GDP or more on defence and we will work together to help drive a stronger, more capable NATO, better able to protect every inch of the Alliance's territory.

Accordingly, we have today signed a new Roadmap setting out how the UK and Estonia plan to deliver our joint NATO commitment for the forward defence of Estonia over the next two years to strengthen NATO's eastern flank. Delivery of the Roadmap will increase the effectiveness of the UK's Forward Land Forces both as a deterrence against aggression and to protect Estonia in times of crisis and conflict.

As well as maintaining the UK's permanently-based armoured Battlegroup in-country – augmented by Divisional-level assets (such as short range air defence and multiple launch rocket systems) and periodic deployments of additional battle-winning capabilities and enablers – the Roadmap will see the first operational deployments of the UK's new Archer artillery system, armoured fighting vehicles and

Challenger 3 to the FLF as well as deploying the Boxer mechanised infantry vehicle to Estonia in the future.

The UK's 4 Brigade Combat Team will be held at high readiness in the UK from July 2025, ready to reinforce Estonia quickly in times of need, in line with the requirements set by NATO defence plans. The UK and Estonia will work together to develop plans for prepositioning Brigade stocks and equipment in Estonia, enhancing integration and interoperability with Estonia's National Defence Plan and enabling rapid reinforcement during crises.

The UK will regularly exercise the reinforcement of Estonia up to Brigade level through regular exercise deployments, such as Exercise Hedgehog in mid-2025. 4 Brigade Combat Team will provide for a modernised, more adaptable and enduring force package capable of deploying at greater speed; one that better complements Estonian capabilities and that can plan and train with Estonia on a long-term basis.

The UK and Estonia welcome France's enduring commitment to NATO Forward Land Forces in Estonia through their valuable contribution of a Medium Battlegroup.

For the greater integration of forces, the UK will fill the position of Deputy Commander in the Estonian Division HQ as well as a number of other staff officer positions in the Division. The UK will also advise and assist the development of the Estonian Division's Deep Capability and continue developing the crisis roles of HQ CABRIT in support of the Estonian Division with the aim of further integration of crisis/wartime roles in the future.

In return, Estonia will ensure the best possible host nation support for UK troops deployed to Estonia. This includes assured and sufficient access to training estates and training on private land as well as all aspects of logistical support and the necessary infrastructure in support of the Forward Land Forces Battlegroup and Brigade.

The UK and Estonia are committed to enhance co-operation between the network of NATO's Forward Land Forces across the Baltic region and have committed to working with the other two Framework Nations (Germany and Canada) and hosts (Latvia and Lithuania) in the 3+3 Defence Ministers' format to enhance Deterrence and Defence across the region.

Industrial Collaboration

The UK and Estonia will intensify our efforts identify opportunities for collaboration to enhance interoperability between, and support of, the Forward Land Forces Battlegroup, Brigade, other sovereign assets, and the Estonian Division (including, ammunition, battlefield communications and Counter-UAV) as well as opportunities to jointly procure ammunition and complex weapons where appropriate. We will work together to support our respective ability to implement NATO's capability targets, as set out in the NATO Defence Planning Process and implementation of the NATO Defence Production Action Plan. And we work together to jointly drive engagement with the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) in support of NATO objectives. The UK and Estonia will also facilitate further contacts and collaboration between defence industry companies, including in the field of possible ammunition production in the Estonian Defence Industry Park project.

Bilateral Defence Co-operation

In addition to the Roadmap signed today, the UK and Estonia will continue to work closely together across all military domains and explore new areas for co-operation and greater integration between our armed forces. Our close collaboration in the JEF acts as an effective additional tier of defence and security in the Baltic Sea, North Atlantic and High North regions – all in support of, and complementing, the NATO Alliance. We will work together with JEF partner nations to set out a new vision for the JEF for the next decade.

The UK and Estonia will remain steadfast in our support for Ukraine and will work together with the international community to ensure Ukraine has the support it needs drive back Russia's unprovoked and illegal invasion and to stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes. The UK and Estonia continue to collaborate on the training of the Armed Forces of Ukraine through Op INTERFLEX. In the longer term, we will assist Ukraine to deter, and defend itself from, any further Russian aggression and support its path to NATO membership.

Governance

To give strategic direction to our ever-closer bilateral defence co-operation, we will continue to meet regularly as Defence Ministers (bilaterally and at NATO and JEF Ministerial meetings) and our Chiefs of Defence Staff will take part in an annual Strategic Dialogue, supported by senior Political-Military discussions also taking place annually.



Rt Hon John Healey MP

Secretary of State for Defence
United Kingdom of Great
Britain and Northern Ireland

Date:

17/10/24
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Hanno Pevkur

Minister of Defence
Republic of Estonia

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