

Joint Statement on Foreign, Development and Security bilateral cooperation between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Netherlands

Introduction

As North Sea neighbours, the governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ('the UK') and the Netherlands, share historic ties of friendship, based on shared values and strong engagement on foreign policy and sustainable development.

We are committed to deepening our diplomatic ties to strengthen our shared capacity to overcome current and future threats to our security and defend our shared values. This Joint Statement sets out our ambition to enhance our bilateral partnership, which encompasses foreign policy, sustainable development, trade promotion, defence and security, climate and energy, and consular affairs.

Our cooperation is consistent with, and also benefits from, the UK-EU framework and both sides see the positive development of that relationship as supportive of our bilateral efforts.

Multilateral Cooperation

As like-minded democracies, we are committed to cooperation in multilateral fora to uphold and defend freedom and democracy, free trade, human rights and the rule of law. These shared values are reinforced by our common membership of organisations, which include the United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the international financial institutions, and the Council of Europe. We reaffirm our mutual commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the promotion of a rules-based international order. Our shared values are of particular importance as Europe's peace and security is threatened in a manner unseen for decades.

Security Cooperation

We stand together in condemning Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, and will continue our support for the Ukrainian government and people to help Ukraine defend itself successfully. We reiterate our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

We remain committed to continued coordination to strengthen peace and security in Europe and the European neighbourhood against Russian aggression, and holding those responsible to account, including through our support to the International Criminal Court following our joint referral of the situation in Ukraine to the Court along with 41 other States.

We reiterate the importance of Ukraine's application instituting proceedings against the Russian Federation before the International Court of Justice under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and our support for Ukraine in these proceedings, and urge Russia to comply with the Court's Order on Provisional Measures of 16 March 2022.

We are committed to collective deterrence and defence through NATO, and will work together to strengthen NATO's long-term defence posture and to ensure NATO has a wide network of partnerships ready to tackle all threats to Euro-Atlantic security. As likeminded Allies, we will work together to ensure that NATO continues to modernise, adapt, and maintain its technological edge in the face of pervasive instability and rising strategic competition. We remain committed to cooperation through the Joint Expeditionary Force and to our strong bilateral cooperation, including through the bilateral UK/Netherlands Amphibious Force, which celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 2023.

We will continue our close cooperation on sanctions, including regular sanctions dialogues. We will also establish a dialogue on disinformation, focused on countering Russia's false narratives and promoting the values of freedom, democracy and territorial integrity.

With respect to MH17, we will continue to do everything in our power to seek truth, justice and accountability for the victims and their next of kin. We reaffirm our support for the ongoing criminal investigation into the involvement of individuals, and we welcome the proceedings against the Russian state at the European Court for Human Rights and the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Energy Security

We will continue our dialogue on energy security, building on discussions at the North Sea Neighbours conference and the North Seas Energy Cooperation, to identify ways to support the clean energy transition as a long-term solution to end reliance on Russian fossil fuels. Noting our interconnected energy markets and making best use of our shared

infrastructure, we will continue regular contact to review winter preparedness and collaborate on security of supply.

Climate action

We will work together as role models and advocates for strong climate and environmental action, by delivering and championing finance for climate adaptation, promoting ocean conservation and protection, halting and reversing biodiversity loss, deforestation and land degradation, and continuing our global leadership towards net zero emissions. We commit to regular Ministerial discussions on delivering on our COP commitments and how we utilise our position as North Sea neighbours to catalyse our shared journey towards net-zero.

Emerging security challenges

We will work together to strengthen our resilience, and that of our allies, against malign operations. We commit to a bilateral dialogue on our approaches and to a broader discussion on economic security. Recognising the range of conventional and unconventional threats we face in the 21st Century, we reaffirm our commitment to an annual cyber dialogue to strengthen cooperation on cybercrime. Given the growing threat arising from hybrid actors and tactics, we commit to regular exchanges on the hybrid threat landscape and counter-hybrid strategies, both on a bilateral basis and within multilateral frameworks.

Irregular migration

As agreed at the European Political Community meeting in Prague on 6 October 2022, we remain committed to tackling irregular migration and reinforcing cooperation with near neighbours.

Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Assistance

We will continue to support progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and the promotion of peace, security, stability and open societies in developing nations. In light of our recently launched international development strategies, and building on our close collaboration in the relevant donor coordination fora and the multilateral governing structures, we commit to working together on shared thematic or country priorities, and in response to humanitarian and development crises. In particular, we will seek to identify further opportunities to work together to promote diversity and inclusion, with particular focus on women, peace and security, gender equality, equal human rights for LGBT+ people, and preventing and condemning sexual violence in conflict.

Strengthening Diplomatic Ties

We will continue to strengthen our diplomatic ties at all levels. We reaffirm our commitment to our annual bilateral 'North Sea Neighbours' conference and our annual joint training of young British and Dutch diplomats, in order to encourage further exchanges between a spectrum of relevant stakeholders in our bilateral relationship. We will build on the success of previous secondments and commit to further exchanges to enhance shared understanding of our respective government systems and policy priorities.

Structuring our Bilateral Cooperation

The Foreign Secretary of the UK and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands will have overarching responsibility for this Joint Statement. They will meet at least annually to review progress, propose new initiatives and consider possibilities for further cooperation.

Our Ambassadors and representatives of our respective foreign ministries will lead on the implementation of this Joint Statement, will coordinate further bilateral arrangements made under the framework of this Joint Statement and report progress to ministers.

They will meet bi-annually to produce and then review a Joint Action Plan, which will underpin this Joint Statement, ensuring that our activity reflects current priorities and the changing geopolitical context in which our cooperation takes place.

This Joint Statement is not legally binding and does not give rise to any rights or obligations under domestic or international law.

Signed in London on 16 November 2022, in the English language.

Secretary of State for Foreign,
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Affairs

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