

UK and Ireland agree updated Memorandum of Understanding on bilateral defence cooperation

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The UK and Ireland will be better protected against common threats as the two nations sign a refreshed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance bilateral defence cooperation.

- Secretary of State for Defence and Irish Minister for Defence Helen McEntee sign refreshed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation.
- Updated MoU will focus on enhanced maritime cooperation, cyber defence, air domain information sharing, and increased joint procurement.
- Comes as the Prime Minister meets Taoiseach Micheál Martin in Cork for the UK-Ireland Leaders' Summit.

The UK and Ireland will be better protected against common threats as the two nations sign a refreshed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance bilateral defence cooperation.

The Secretary of State for Defence and Irish Minister for Defence Helen McEntee have signed an updated MoU focusing on enhanced maritime cooperation, cyber defence, air domain information sharing, and increased joint procurement.

The refreshed MoU will see the UK Armed Forces and the Irish Defence Forces strengthen their maritime security cooperation to better protect critical undersea infrastructure and develop improved response mechanisms to maritime security incidents.

Under the MoU, both governments will also explore opportunities for joint procurement of military equipment and new Government-to-Government sales.

In the air and cyber domain, the UK and Ireland will boost their information sharing, improve joint situational awareness, and increase resilience against threats.

It comes as the Prime Minister meets his Irish counterpart Taoiseach Micheál Martin in Cork for the UK-Ireland Leaders' Summit.

Defence Secretary John Healey MP said:

The UK and Ireland share a long history of defence cooperation — from crisis management and humanitarian operations to training, military education and staff exchanges.

This rebooted Memorandum of Understanding modernises our framework for cooperation on areas critical to both our nations' security, in particular to counter the growing undersea and cyber threats we share.

Irish Minister for Defence Helen McEntee TD said:

It is appropriate that, after ten years, we take the opportunity to refresh our Memorandum of Understanding and provide for a particular focus in such areas as maritime, cyber defence, air information sharing and joint procurement initiatives.

There will also be a continued focus on the already existing Defence co-operation arrangements between Ireland and the UK on a more formal and transparent footing.

In addition, the MOU emphasises continued collaboration in UN peacekeeping, crisis management, and humanitarian operations, enhanced cooperation on training and military education exchanges, and continued support for and joint opportunities in Ukraine as members of the Coalition of the Willing.

This refreshed MoU replaces the previous 2015 agreement signed by then Defence Secretary Michael Fallon and Minister Simon Coveney.

It fulfils the commitment made by the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach at the 2025 UK-Ireland Leaders' Summit to update the MoU in line with the strengthened and evolving partnership between both countries.

In an era of rising threats to both nations, this modernised MoU provides a stronger, more agile foundation for cooperation, while respecting the distinct defence and security policies of both countries.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-ireland-agree-updated-memorandum-of-understanding-on-bilateral-defence-cooperation>