

UK and Belgium sign multi-million pound Mission Data partnership

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The UK and Belgium have signed an MOU that will see Belgium invest over five years in UK expertise to develop world-class mission data collection and exploitation.

- UK and Belgium sign Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to help Belgium develop its own mission data capability.
- Belgium to invest over five years, with UK firm QinetiQ leading the work.
- Agreement deepens the two nations growing defence relationship and demonstrates UK commitment to NATO.

The UK and Belgium have signed an MOU that will see Belgium invest over five years in UK expertise to develop world-class mission data collection and exploitation.

Mission data plays an increasingly vital role in today's digitally-enabled battlespace, giving armed forces the operational edge required to deter and defeat adversaries. As military platforms become more sophisticated, they rely on precise, mission-specific information collected, analysed and distilled from sources including threat signatures, radar and communications frequencies, to stay safe and effective against rapidly evolving threats.

UK firm QinetiQ will work with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the UK, Belgium and in Europe to support Belgium in strengthening its ability to collect, manage and exploit mission data. They will export their expertise in mission data to help establish a sovereign Joint Electromagnetic Warfare Support Centre (JEWSC) in Belgium.

Minister for Defence Readiness and Industry, Luke Pollard MP, said:

By combining our expertise and investing in shared capabilities, we are strengthening NATO and showing Britain stands shoulder-to-shoulder with our European allies.

This is not just good news for our partnership with Belgium - it is good news for the UK defence industry. A significant amount of this investment will flow directly into the UK.

Steve Wadey, Group CEO, QinetiQ, said:

Our extensive operational experience supporting the UK's production and management of its mission data means we're in a unique position to provide specialist expertise and training to allied nations, as they build and enhance their own sovereign capabilities in this increasingly critical area for defence.

We look forward to working with partners across industry and government to deliver this vital capability to the Government of Belgium.

Major General Ciparisse, Commander of the Belgian Cyber Force, said:

To address the growing need for specialised electromagnetic warfare (EW) experts and to support the introduction of new high technology weapon systems, it appeared entirely natural for us to adopt a cooperation model inspired by the successful British SOCIETAS programme and the United Kingdom's long-standing experience in electronic warfare.

The programme will help us establish a structured partnership between our JEWSC and Belgian industry, complemented by organised collaboration with QinetiQ and UK industrial partners. Through this approach, industrial actors in both Belgium and the United Kingdom stand to benefit from shared expertise, technology exchange, and new opportunities for joint development.

This initiative aims to provide Belgium with a reliable, long term and sovereign EW capability, reinforcing national resilience in an increasingly complex electromagnetic environment.

The partnership strengthens broader NATO cooperation. The work complements existing collaboration on the General Atomics MQ-9B Protector unmanned Aircraft system and will enhance the UK's ability to support the Protector fleet across Europe, including with German and Danish allies through the NATO Support and Procurement Agency.

The agreement enhances resilience and will support a number of capabilities across NATO. It supports the development of much needed skills and will provide the springboard for deeper cooperative activities between the nations.

Belgium and the UK intend to move towards a burden-sharing model, generating further mutual benefits and building long-term resilience across both countries' defence capabilities.

The UK has committed to the largest sustained increase in defence spending since the end of the Cold War, hitting 2.6% of GDP from 2027, and the UK defence budget will total £270 billion across this Parliament alone.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-belgium-sign-multi-million-pound-mission-data-partnership>