

UK-Sweden Joint Leaders Statement: 19 June 2023

The UK and Sweden share historic ties of friendship and are essential allies. We have forged a strong partnership, based on shared values and in support of multilateralism and a rules-based international order. We are united in our steadfast commitment to working together for the security and protection of our citizens and to strengthen European security as a whole. This Leaders' Statement celebrates and reasserts the enduring and extensive connections between the United Kingdom and Sweden, which benefit from the agreements between the United Kingdom and the European Union, of which Sweden is a member.

Foreign policy, defence and security cooperation

1. The UK and Sweden are close security partners, and we welcome the strong and growing defence relationship. We are united in our strong support for Ukraine and in condemning Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion. We reaffirm our commitments made in the Political Declaration of Solidarity of May 2022. We will build on this to forge ever closer defence and security ties, bilaterally, as well as through the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), and soon as NATO allies, to meet shared regional and global security challenges. Through regular bilateral consultations, both in the Joint Staff talks and the 2+2 Defence and Security Dialogue, Sweden and the UK will identify opportunities for enhanced bilateral collaboration. We will continue to train and exercise together to ensure our Armed Forces are able to operate together effectively across all domains. EU-UK cooperation in security and defence reinforces the bilateral UK-Swedish bond.
2. We confirm our unwavering commitment to continue working together for the successful finalisation of Sweden's NATO membership ahead of the Vilnius Summit in July. Swedish membership will strengthen NATO and bolster Euro-Atlantic security. Sweden is strongly aligned with NATO principles and values, has years of experience training and operating with Allies, including the UK, and will bring a modern and well-trained military into the Alliance.
3. Building on our work from March 2023 on our collaborative procurement of an artillery solution, ARCHER, we reiterate our intentions to continue to work together as we integrate this full platform into service with our Armed Forces. In order to further strengthen our current bilateral cooperation on defence capabilities, promote interoperability and enhance our joint capabilities, the UK and Sweden will collaborate on working towards refreshing our existing MOU by 2024 and explore opportunities to deepen our defence industrial collaboration.
4. We recognise the continued importance of the JEF and its evolving role in strengthening the security of northern Europe. We will work together to build an ambitious programme for the JEF Leaders' summit hosted by Sweden in October, and work with all partners to announce a bold vision for the JEF's future.
5. We welcome our close dialogue and cooperation on responding to China as a systemic challenge. We will protect national security, cooperate with partners and engage with China where it is consistent with our national interests and security, including to support

an open and stable rules-based international order and global challenges such as biological diversity and climate change. We call upon China not to provide material assistance to Russia or Russian proxies in Russia's illegal war in Ukraine. We reaffirm the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. We will continue to raise concerns with China on human rights violations and abuses, including in Xinjiang and Tibet, and the continued erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy, rights and freedom.

Ukraine

6. The UK and Sweden stand together in condemning Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and will continue our support to Ukraine to defend itself for as long as it takes. We reiterate our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and its territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We are leaders in the provision of support to Ukraine: military; humanitarian; economic; and legal.
7. The UK and Sweden have collaborated on support to Ukraine, both through the International Fund for Ukraine (IFU) and the training of Armed Forces of Ukraine personnel on Op INTERFLEX. [Building on recent donations of artillery to Ukraine by the UK (AS90) and Sweden (Archer), we look forward to working together on the provision of a collaborative artillery in-service support solution for Ukraine.
8. We are committed to Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction. We look forward to the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC23) on 21-22 June in London. The Stockholm Conference on 8 June provided important input on private sector engagement. We remain committed to strengthening the unprecedented and coordinated sanctions and other economic measures the UK and the EU have taken to date, to further counter Russia's capacity to wage its illegal aggression.

Deepening and broadening bilateral relations

9. Building on our existing close cooperation, the UK and Sweden wish to further deepen our bilateral partnership.
10. Sweden and the UK remain staunch supporters of an open, sustainable, and rules-based trade. We remain committed to increasing the volume of our trade and investment and tackle any bilateral obstacles that may hinder the development of the economic and trade cooperation between our countries. We reaffirm our commitment to continue holding the annual UK-Sweden Business Forum, supported by our Trade Ministers, and note the successful roundtable with stakeholders on 16 May 2023.
11. As world leaders in science, innovation and technology, the UK and Sweden commit to closer collaboration. Our shared high ambitions span across emerging technologies such as AI, where we recognise the need to accelerate cooperation to ensure the safe and responsible development of the technology, and engineering biology, to clean energy, digitalisation, and life sciences. Together, we can fuel creativity, accelerate discoveries, and address global challenges. We therefore commit to cooperating in the area of innovation, skills and civil nuclear energy, including on small modular reactors, and in future energy sources such as fusion.

12. We celebrate our countries' respective strengths in the field of science and technology, as demonstrated by the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Life Sciences last year. The Memorandum highlights areas for further work including genomics and clinical trials and sets out our strong existing cooperation on Anti-Microbial Resistance. We are committed to strengthening our research collaboration bilaterally and multilaterally. We welcome Sweden's intention to become a full member of the Square Kilometre Array Observatory and reaffirm UK support for the European Spallation Source.
13. We will deepen our science and innovation partnership further, strengthening our relationship in research and innovation policy, with a focus on commercialisation and collaboration. In the coming months, in consultation with our stakeholders, we will identify priority areas for action vital for our national security and prosperity. We will build on our respective strengths to retain our strategic advantage and overcome global challenges.
14. We remain committed to tackling irregular migration and strengthening cooperation with European partners. We recognise the importance of working together to address this shared challenge and commit to combat migrant smuggling and trafficking that puts the lives of migrants at risk, disrespecting human life and dignity in the pursuit of profit. We note the need for closer bilateral and EU-UK cooperation to improve migration management including upstream along irregular migration routes to Europe, within Europe, and at the EU's external borders, taking into account the obligations arising from Sweden's membership of the European Union. We also note the possibility of a future UK-Frontex working arrangement
15. We value the extensive people-to-people links across our countries and the great benefits it brings to both our societies. We support the exchange of young people between our countries and will endeavour to strengthen these ties further including in relation to students and cooperation between our universities.
16. We celebrate our countries' shared commitment to climate and environmental leadership, building consensus and prioritising sustainable development. We will target joint cooperation to limit warming to 1.5°C, including through upholding our mutual commitments to publish NDCs to 2035, and on halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030, conserving and managing 30% of natural areas, building on the Paris, Glasgow, and Kunming-Montreal agreements. We are proud to have jointly established the Forum for International Cooperation on Air Pollution, through which we will continue to utilise our expertise to help other regions of the world to reduce air pollution and mitigate climate change, working towards our respective Net Zero targets.

Conclusion

17. This Joint Statement sets out our strong ambition to enhance the UK-Sweden bilateral partnership in the future, and we look forward to our Foreign Ministers meeting in Sweden next week. We will deepen our existing cooperation and explore new opportunities, in particular in the fields of defence and security, innovation and research, and science and technology. In this spirit, we will immediately begin work to

agree a comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement to be signed before the end of the year.