

HOUSE OF LORDS

International Agreements Committee

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7th Report of Session 2024–25

# Defence Cooperation Agreements with Romania and Australia

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### *International Agreements Committee*

The International Agreements Committee is appointed by the House of Lords in each session to consider, and where appropriate report on, 1) matters relating to the negotiation, conclusion and implementation of international agreements, and 2) treaties laid before Parliament in accordance with Part 2 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

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[Lord Fox](#)

[Lord German](#)

[Lord Goldsmith](#) (Chair)

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[Baroness Lawlor](#)

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## SUMMARY

This report considers the following two agreements, laid before Parliament in accordance with section 20 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010:

- Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Romania on Defence Cooperation, CP1247, 2025
- Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Australia for Defence and Security Cooperation, CP1256, 2025

The UK-Romania Defence Cooperation Agreement replaces earlier commitments made in Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed in 1996 and 2019 with provisions that are legally binding.

The UK-Australia Defence Cooperation Agreement updates a Defence and Security Cooperation Treaty in force since 2014 to reflect a more modern partnership. It replicates provisions in the Treaty to a large extent, apart from two significant changes. Firstly, the new Agreement includes arrangements to enhance consultation between Parties on issues that affect their regional security and sovereignty. Secondly, the Annex of the new Agreement contains a Status of Forces Agreement that enables military personnel to better operate together and in each other's territories.

We welcome the evolving and wide-ranging defence relationship between the UK and Romania and between the UK and Australia.

We report the Defence Cooperation Agreements with Romania and Australia to the House for information.

# Defence Cooperation Agreements with Romania and Australia

## AGREEMENTS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION

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**Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Romania on Defence Cooperation<sup>1</sup>**

**Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Australia for Defence and Security Cooperation<sup>2</sup>**

1. The UK-Romania Defence Cooperation Agreement (UK-Romania DCA) was laid before Parliament on 20 January 2025. The UK-Australia Defence Cooperation Agreement (UK-Australia DCA) was laid before Parliament on 22 January 2025. The periods for scrutiny under s. 20 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act (CRAG) expire on 4 and 6 March respectively. This report will consider both agreements.

### **Background to the UK-Romania Defence Cooperation Agreement**

2. The UK has a longstanding defence relationship with Romania. A Memorandum of Understanding on the ‘Enhancement of Bilateral Defence Cooperation’ between the UK and Romania was signed in March 2019, building on an earlier MoU signed in 1996. The Government states that the 2019 MoU was intended to forge a new industrial relationship to “develop cutting-edge defence capabilities and to work directly with one another on defence intelligence, military medicine, health support services and developing green initiatives on defence estates.”<sup>3</sup>
3. The 2019 MoU was also designed to address future cooperation in the Black Sea<sup>4</sup> and the Western Balkans<sup>5</sup> regions following the deployment of HMS Echo, a hydrographic survey ship, to the Black Sea in 2018. This operation was part of the UK’s plans to work with Ukraine in response to the growing threat from Russia. The UK had also previously operated in the region

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1 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, *Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Romania on Defence Cooperation*, CP 1247 (13 November 2024): [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/678e2aff91b710d43488f614/CS\\_Romania\\_1.2025\\_Agreement\\_Defence\\_Cooperation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/678e2aff91b710d43488f614/CS_Romania_1.2025_Agreement_Defence_Cooperation.pdf) [accessed 17 February 2025]

2 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, *Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Australia for Defence and Security Cooperation*, CP 1256 (21 March 2024): [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/678fbfd17bb65baf62c2adb6/CS\\_Australia\\_1.2025\\_Agreement\\_Defence\\_Security\\_Cooperation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/678fbfd17bb65baf62c2adb6/CS_Australia_1.2025_Agreement_Defence_Security_Cooperation.pdf) [accessed 17 February 2025]

3 Ministry of Defence, ‘UK and Romania signal shared commitment to Black Sea security’ (13 March 2019): <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-romania-signal-shared-commitment-to-black-sea-security--2> [accessed 17 February 2025]

4 The Black Sea is located in southeastern Europe, and borders with Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania.

5 The Western Balkans include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo.

several times in a bid to reassure European Allies and NATO's coalition partners of their shared commitment to European security.<sup>6</sup>

4. However, according to the Explanatory Memorandum (EM) for the UK-Romania DCA, the 2019 MoU is "limited in coverage" and no longer conveys the evolving nature and expanding scope of defence relations between the Parties.<sup>7</sup> The DCA was signed in London on 13 November 2024 as a signal of the Parties' mutual interests in forming a closer defence partnership.
5. The armed forces from both countries have cooperated with each other for many years, but most recently, a Royal Air Force fighter squadron containing six Typhoons and around 200 personnel was deployed to Romania for four months as part of NATO air policing missions.<sup>8</sup> 2024 also saw a number of other collaborative operations between the Parties preceding the signing of the DCA. This included a British Army deployment to the Carpathian Mountains in Romania in September and October alongside NATO allies as part of Exercise Sarmis, a project to further operational effectiveness in mountainous terrain.<sup>9</sup>
6. Developments in the bilateral defence relationship are also part of a wider cooperation. The UK and Romania established a Strategic Partnership in 2003, which was renewed in 2023.<sup>10</sup> The Partnership makes provision for several areas of cooperation, including defence and security. The Joint Statement in 2023 highlighted the following key priorities in the context of defence and security:

"We are committed to collective defence through NATO. We will work together to strengthen the transatlantic relationship, coordinating on policies and initiatives that promote strategic resilience. The UK and Romania will strengthen NATO's long-term defence posture, ensuring it has a wide network of partnerships ready to tackle all threats to Euro-Atlantic security. Russia's aggressive actions in the Black Sea, especially in Ukraine, since 2014 highlight the importance of cooperating on our mutual security and collective defence. We will deepen our diplomatic,

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6 Ministry of Defence, 'UK and Romania signal shared commitment to Black Sea security' (13 March 2019): <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-romania-signal-shared-commitment-to-black-sea-security--2> [accessed 17 February 2025]

7 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, *Explanatory Memorandum on the Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Romania on Defence Cooperation* (January 2025): [https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F678e2d5faf483d80fc9bdade%2FEM\\_CS\\_Romania\\_1.2025\\_Agreement\\_Defence\\_Cooperation.odt&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F678e2d5faf483d80fc9bdade%2FEM_CS_Romania_1.2025_Agreement_Defence_Cooperation.odt&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) [accessed 17 February 2025]

8 Ministry of Defence, 'New defence treaty with Romania deepens relations and supports collective security' (13 November 2024): <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-defence-treaty-with-romania-deepens-relations-and-supports-collective-security> [accessed 17 February 2025]

9 Royal Anglian Regiment, '1st Battalion deployed to the Carpathian Mountains' (23 October 2024): <https://www.royalanglianregiment.com/news/1st-battalion-deployed-to-the-carpathian-mountains/> [accessed 17 February 2025]

10 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, *Joint statement on the Romanian-British Strategic Partnership* (23 March 2023): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/romanian-british-strategic-partnership-joint-statement-2023/joint-statement-on-the-romanian-british-strategic-partnership-march-2023#defence-and-security> [accessed 17 February 2025]

security and defence cooperation, strengthening our capacity to overcome current and future security threats.”<sup>11</sup>

### Content of the UK-Romania Defence Cooperation Agreement

7. The EM states that the purpose of the DCA is to build on existing commitments in the MoUs and provide a legal basis for the ongoing development of the bilateral defence partnership between the UK and Romania. These MoUs, which have not been made publicly available, will be terminated once the Agreement comes into force.<sup>12</sup>
8. According to the EM, the DCA facilitates a comprehensive strategic framework to further defence relations with a “key NATO ally and European partner.” Expected benefits include improved capability development and operational efficiency against external aggression.<sup>13</sup> The reciprocal nature of the DCA allows for cooperation in areas such as training, use of national facilities, exchanges and visits, exercises, meetings and staff talks.
9. Article 4 of the DCA states that the Parties “shall assist one another” in various areas of defence, including defence policy and planning, exercises and operations, exchange of personnel and information, intelligence, communications and visits. Article 4 also allows for flexibility to identify other potential avenues of cooperation subject to approval by a joint committee. The joint committee will meet on an annual basis to discuss implementation of the DCA and to explore alternative forms of cooperation. The DCA also makes provisions for developing a joint three year ‘Action plan’ that will determine the programme for collaboration and highlight any potential issues to address.<sup>14</sup> The UK and Romania will also agree on a list of ‘Agreed facilities and areas’ where forces from both Parties will be authorised to construct on and access these facilities and areas. Further detail on this aspect will be set out in separate Implementing arrangements.
10. As the UK and Romania are both members of NATO, the DCA is underpinned by the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, a multilateral agreement signed in 1951 to define the status (jurisdictional and legal) of military personnel while serving in the territory of another Party.<sup>15</sup> The DCA therefore does not contain detailed provisions on the status of forces when they are visiting the territory of the other Party, but states that “any

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11 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, *Joint statement on the Romanian-British Strategic Partnership* (23 March 2023): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/romanian-british-strategic-partnership-joint-statement-2023/joint-statement-on-the-romanian-british-strategic-partnership-march-2023#defence-and-security> [accessed 17 February 2025]

12 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, *Explanatory Memorandum on the Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Romania on Defence Cooperation* (January 2025): [https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F678e2d5faf483d80fc9bdade%2FEM\\_CS\\_Romania\\_1.2025\\_Agreement\\_Defence\\_Cooperation.odt&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F678e2d5faf483d80fc9bdade%2FEM_CS_Romania_1.2025_Agreement_Defence_Cooperation.odt&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) [accessed 17 February 2025]

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*

15 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, ‘Agreement between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization regarding the Status of their Forces’ (19 June 1951): [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_17265.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17265.htm) [accessed 17 February 2025]

further necessary arrangements” would be included in “separate specific Implementing arrangements.”<sup>16</sup>

### *UK-EU security and support for Ukraine*

11. When signing the treaty, the UK Government stated that one of the aims of promoting greater defence cooperation between the Parties is to maintain peace and security in Europe.<sup>17</sup> The DCA also conveys a mutual commitment to support Ukraine. To date, Romania has sent troops to the UK to provide training to Ukrainian soldiers as part of Operation Interflex, which teaches basic infantry and combat skills.<sup>18</sup>
12. The DCA highlights the strategic importance of the Black Sea and the Western Balkan regions, and the need for “enhanced cooperation to address issues impacting these regions in support of the security and stability of both Parties.”<sup>19</sup> Paul Humurz, a Romanian security expert, wrote that defence cooperation will consolidate NATO’s defence presence in the Black Sea.<sup>20</sup> He also maintains that Romania, with support from the UK, will establish a Regional Maritime Training Center to train Ukrainian marines, although there is no reference made to this project in the DCA.
13. **We welcome the fact that commitments set out in previous MoUs will now be formalised in a legally binding agreement between the UK and Romania.**

### *Background to the UK-Australia Defence Cooperation Agreement*

14. The UK and Australia have an enduring relationship, including in the sphere of defence and security. A Defence and Security Cooperation Treaty (DSC Treaty) has been in force since 2014 which formalised the well-established defence partnership between the UK and Australia.
15. According to the Explanatory Memorandum (EM) that accompanies the UK-Australia Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA), it was decided at the Australia-UK Ministerial meeting (AUKMIN) in 2023 that the DSC Treaty required a “comprehensive refresh”.<sup>21</sup> The UK-Australia DCA was

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16 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, *Explanatory Memorandum on the Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Romania on Defence Cooperation* (January 2025): [https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F678e2d5faf483d80fc9bdade%2FEM\\_CS\\_Romania\\_1.2025\\_Agreement\\_Defence\\_Cooperation.odt&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F678e2d5faf483d80fc9bdade%2FEM_CS_Romania_1.2025_Agreement_Defence_Cooperation.odt&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) [accessed 17 February 2025]

17 Ministry of Defence, ‘New defence treaty with Romania deepens relations and supports collective security’ (13 November 2024): <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-defence-treaty-with-romania-deepens-relations-and-supports-collective-security> [accessed 17 February 2025]

18 *Ibid.*

19 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, *Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Romania on Defence Cooperation*, CP 1247 (13 November 2024): [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/678e2aff91b710d43488f614/CS\\_Romania\\_1.2025\\_Agreement\\_Defence\\_Cooperation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/678e2aff91b710d43488f614/CS_Romania_1.2025_Agreement_Defence_Cooperation.pdf) [accessed 17 February 2025]

20 Paul Hurmuz, ‘The Romanian-British defense cooperation agreement will strengthen NATO’s defense activity in the Black Sea’ (16 November 2024): <https://friendshipbridge.eu/2024/11/16/the-romanian-british-defense-cooperation-agreement-2024-en/> [accessed 17 February 2025]

21 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, *Explanatory Memorandum on the Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Australia for Defence and Security Cooperation* (January 2025): [https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F678fbfef3087686d77328b29%2FEM\\_CS\\_Australia\\_1.2025\\_Agreement\\_Defence\\_Security\\_Cooperation.odt&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F678fbfef3087686d77328b29%2FEM_CS_Australia_1.2025_Agreement_Defence_Security_Cooperation.odt&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) [accessed 17 February 2025]



signed in Canberra on 21 March 2024 with the aim of modernising the partnership in the face of global challenges.

16. The DCA is also part of a wider framework of defence cooperation between the UK, Australia and US, known as AUKUS. This trilateral security coalition was established in 2021 to promote a secure and stable Indo-Pacific.<sup>22</sup>

### **Content of the UK-Australia Defence Cooperation Agreement**

17. The purpose of the DCA is to update and replace the 2014 DSC Treaty to reflect the enhanced nature of bilateral defence cooperation.”<sup>23</sup> The DCA reinforces the importance of the UK-Australia defence relationship, and includes two new significant additions:
  - Article 5 formalises the requirement to consult on matters that affect the sovereignty and regional security of the Parties.
  - The status of forces (SOFA) provisions in the Annex to the DCA provide a legal framework to facilitate arrangements for military personnel and their dependents to operate together and in each other’s territories.

The Government stated that the DCA will improve the operationalisation of armed forces in both countries, similar to Operation Interflex that enables the joint training of Ukrainian troops in the UK.<sup>24</sup>

18. Apart from the additional provisions mentioned above, the DCA replicates the DSC Treaty to a large extent, and includes provisions in the following areas: Access to Facilities; Provision of Training Areas; Environmental protections; Civil Claims and Liabilities; Taxation, Protection of Information; and settlement of disputes.
19. **We welcome the introduction of two new provisions to deepen consultation and establish a Status of Forces Agreement between the UK and Australia.**

### *Bilateral defence cooperation and AUKUS*

20. Article 3 of the DCA details areas of cooperation between both Parties, and Article (2)c refers to cooperation and exchange of information related to AUKUS, a trilateral security coalition between the UK, Australia and the US. The defence capabilities covered by this clause are: conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarines, advanced cyber, artificial intelligence,

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22 International Agreements Committee, [The AUKUS Naval Nuclear Propulsion Cooperation Agreement](#) (3rd Report, Session 2024–25, HL Paper 21)

23 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, *Explanatory Memorandum on the Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Australia for Defence and Security Cooperation* (January 2025): [https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F678fbfef3087686d77328b29%2FEM\\_CS\\_Australia\\_1.2025\\_Agreement\\_Defence\\_Security\\_Cooperation.odt&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F678fbfef3087686d77328b29%2FEM_CS_Australia_1.2025_Agreement_Defence_Security_Cooperation.odt&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) [accessed 17 February 2025]

24 HM Government, ‘UK and Australia commit to modernising and deepening defence relationship’ (20 March 2024): <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-australia-commit-to-modernising-and-deepening-defence-relationship> [accessed 17 February 2025]

electronic warfare, undersea warfare, hypersonic and counter-hypersonic technology, and quantum technologies.<sup>25</sup>

21. Under the AUKUS framework the UK plans to increase military visits to Australia from 2026 as well as establishing a submarine rotational force known as ‘Submarine Rotational Force-West’ in 2027.<sup>26</sup> The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) contained in the DCA will therefore support this activity.
22. **We note the significance of the status of forces provisions in the Agreement to supporting future military deployments under the AUKUS framework. We reiterate our welcome for the rapidly growing AUKUS partnership set out in our recent report and debate on the AUKUS naval nuclear propulsion cooperation agreement.**

#### **Reporting for information**

23. **We report the Agreements to the House for information, together with our comments at paragraphs 13, 19 and 22.**

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25 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, *Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Australia for Defence and Security Cooperation*, CP 1256 (21 March 2024): [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/678fbfd17bb65baf62c2adb6/CS\\_Australia\\_1\\_2025\\_Agreement\\_Defence\\_Security\\_Cooperation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/678fbfd17bb65baf62c2adb6/CS_Australia_1_2025_Agreement_Defence_Security_Cooperation.pdf) [accessed 17 February 2025]

26 Prime Minister’s Office, *Trilateral Australia-UK-US Partnership on Nuclear Powered Submarines* (updated 13 March 2023): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus-13-march-2023/fact-sheet-trilateral-australia-uk-us-partnership-on-nuclear-powered-submarines> [accessed 17 February 2025]

## APPENDIX 1: LIST OF MEMBERS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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### Members

Lord Anderson of Swansea  
 Lord Boateng  
 Lord Fox  
 Lord German  
 Lord Goldsmith KC (Chair)  
 Lord Hannay of Chiswick  
 Lord Howell of Guildford  
 Baroness Lawlor  
 Lord Marland  
 Lord McDonald of Salford  
 Lord Stevenson of Balmacara  
 Baroness Verma

### Declarations of Interest

Lord Anderson of Swansea  
*No relevant interests*

Lord Boateng  
*Independent non-executive director, at the Ghana International Bank  
 Board member, Syngenta Foundation*

Lord Fox  
*No relevant interests*

Lord German  
*No relevant interests*

Lord Goldsmith KC  
*Partner, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP (International law firm)*

Lord Hannay of Chiswick  
*Member, advisory board of the Centre for European Reform,  
 Member, European Leadership Network  
 Chair, European & International Analysts Group*

Lord Howell of Guildford  
*No relevant interests*

Baroness Lawlor  
*No relevant interests*

Lord Marland  
*Director, Fanspeed Technologies Ltd (manufacturer of motor parts)*

Lord McDonald of Salford  
*No relevant interests*

Lord Stevenson of Balmacara  
*No relevant interests*

Baroness Verma  
*No relevant interests*

Specialist Adviser, Professor Sarah Hall  
*No relevant interests*