

# News story: Armed Forces Minister bolsters UK-Italy defence partnership

The Defence Minister highlighted how our Armed Forces' can work closer together at a Protection of Cultural Heritage event, before further discussing future co-operation with Italian Defence partners.

Minister for the Armed Forces Mark Lancaster said:

European security is UK security and we are strengthening our defence partnership with Italy, a key NATO ally.

Our two countries cooperate on a wide range of shared security challenges, from threats to valuable cultural property to countering cyber-attacks.

At the Protection of Cultural Heritage event, Lancaster announced that the Army-led Cultural Property Protection Unit (CPPU) is now starting to recruit reservists. The CPPU was established as part of the UK Government's implementation of the Hague Convention that places obligations on the Armed Forces for the protection of cultural property from damage, destruction and looting.

In speaking with Italian counterparts, he reaffirmed the UK's commitment to the Statement of Intent signed earlier this year to further defence and security cooperation between the two countries in the maritime, land, air and cyber domains and to strengthen the interoperability of our Armed Forces through regular planning and training activities.

The Defence Minister also met with British Armed Forces personnel posted in Italy including those in the Combined Libya Fusion Cell, a multinational intelligence group monitoring the situation in Libya, and the European Naval Force mission to disrupt human trafficking networks in the Mediterranean.