

BRITAIN
STRONGER
IN
EUROPE

10 ways being in the EU strengthens UK defence

For centuries Britain has been a powerful trading nation with a dynamic economy at the centre of European and world affairs. That's how we became the strong, proud, prosperous country we are today. It's why British people are better off and safer. That's why the choice facing us in this referendum is the biggest we've ever had to make.

Do we remain part of the biggest duty free area on the planet, or do we walk away, risking jobs and weakening our economy?

Do we continue to lead in the world by leading in Europe, or do we risk diminishing our influence on the world stage by turning our back on Europe?

Do we protect our ability to combat security threats like cross-border crime, terrorism and climate change, or do we reject the partnerships that make it possible?

In short, do we choose to be stronger, with an economy that creates new opportunities and has the power to shape the future, or do we choose to be weaker, less able to influence global developments that risk harming our economy and compromising our safety?

In the complex world of today, the UK has more control over its destiny by staying inside organisations like the EU. We would never dream of leaving the UN or NATO. Why would we leave the EU?

After all, Europe is our neighbourhood. We have friends there and together we have the numbers to influence the rest of the world.

Many of the threats to Britain's security are global in nature, like terrorism, the aggression of Russia and cross-border crime. Whether it's implementing sanctions against Russia, sharing intelligence about terrorists or arresting and deporting criminals using the European Arrest Warrant, being in Europe makes us safer. There is strength in numbers.

This paper from Britain Stronger In Europe outlines ten ways in which Britain's membership of the EU strengthens Britain's national security.

From intelligence-sharing to strengthening our relationship with the US, from complementing NATO to supporting other countries' security forces, the EU is a vital component of our security and defence architecture.

Alongside the weight of economic evidence which shows that our economy is stronger in Europe, it is also clear that leaving the EU would diminish our influence in the world and threaten our safety.

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- 9. Being in the EU strengthens the UK's counter-terrorism effort and intelligence-sharing**
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1. Being in gives the UK influence over EU foreign and security policy

If we left Europe, the EU would still be active in foreign and security policy, in its neighbourhood and around the world. What the EU does will affect British interests – precisely because those British interests are global.

EU foreign and security policy is decided by EU countries' leaders and foreign and defence ministers. From inside, the UK has a veto over EU foreign and security policy. As one of the EU's two biggest and most experienced military powers and permanent UN Security Council members, the UK - along with France - has particular influence.

The Government's 2013 EU Balance of Competences Review in foreign and defence policy concluded that the high level of UK involvement in EU policy:

“... has made the EU's external tools better suited, and its action more effective, than they would otherwise have been, as one of our options for pursuing our enlightened national interest”.ⁱ

If we left, the UK would lose its veto and its influence over EU policy. Our Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary would no longer be at the decision-making table.

As the Defence Secretary Michael Fallon has said, the "collective weight" of partnerships such as the EU made it easier to deal with global threats.ⁱⁱ

This would increase the risk of the EU turning inward, failing to step up to meet security challenges abroad, or spending defence money inefficiently or in ways that duplicate NATO.

From outside, the UK would have to devote extra resources to influencing and coordinating with the EU. With a greater risk that EU states' defence and security policies would fall short, a heavier burden might fall on the UK military.

This would come at a time when Europe faces unprecedented security challenges, from Russia to Islamist terrorism to instability to its South and East generating a migration crisis. The way in which the EU responds will affect the UK, whether we are in or out.

The Government's 2015 National Security Strategy said:

“A secure and prosperous Europe is essential for a secure and prosperous UK.”ⁱⁱⁱ

If we remain in, the UK is better placed to make sure that the EU's foreign and security policies are effective, at a time when they need to be more than ever before.

2. Being in complements NATO

NATO remains the cornerstone of UK defence.

While being a member of the EU, the UK has continued to meet the NATO target of spending 2% of GDP on defence. It was one of only five NATO states to do this in 2015.^{iv} When the UK hosted the NATO summit in Wales in 2014, it secured a commitment from those of its allies not already spending this much to increase their spending to this level.^v The government has committed the UK to fulfilling the NATO defence spending target for the rest of this parliament.^{vi} Indeed, the UK is better placed to meet this target due to the financial security arising from our access to the EU's free trade single market.

Being in the EU complements our being in NATO. The two organisations have to coordinate and cooperate. Given the large overlap between their memberships, the military capabilities of EU states are also those of NATO countries.

As an EU member, the UK is better able to ensure that the EU complements NATO; carries out roles that support NATO's objectives; carries out roles that NATO, as a purely military organisation, could not do; and has better military capabilities among its member states.

The Government's 2013 EU Balance of Competences Review in foreign and defence policy concluded that:

“Increased capacity in other Member States to act can result in them taking a greater share in the burden of providing forces for international operations, whether under the EU, NATO or other organisations.”^{vii}

The NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg (from the non-EU state of Norway), wants the UK to remain in the EU. In February 2016, he said:

“A strong European Union with a strong Britain is good for NATO, because Britain is a global player, and a strong EU will also make sure that NATO has a strong partner... For NATO it is important to have a strong Europe, and a strong Britain in a strong Europe is contributing to stability and also underlines the importance of us staying together, working together, in a time when we see more turmoil, more violence, more instability than we have seen for many, many years.”^{viii}

3. Being in strengthens our relationship with the US

The US is our most important strategic ally. The Government's 2015 National Security Strategy said:

"Our special relationship with the US remains essential to our national security."^x

The US wants the UK to remain in the EU. President Obama has made this clear more than once. In July 2015 he said:

"Having the United Kingdom in the European Union gives much greater confidence about the strength of the Transatlantic union, and is part of the cornerstone of institutions built after World War Two that has made the world safer and more prosperous, and we want to make sure that the United Kingdom continues to have that influence."^x

In February 2016, the White House said that in a telephone call with the Prime Minister President Obama:

"reaffirmed continued US support for a strong United Kingdom in a strong European Union".^{xi}

Secretary of State John Kerry reiterated the same message. He said:

"I want to express the confidence of President Obama and all of us in America that, just as it has so many times before, Europe is going to emerge stronger than ever, provided it stays united and builds common responses to these challenges. Obviously, the United States has a profound interest in your success, as we do in a very strong United Kingdom staying in a strong EU."^{xii}

US support for the UK remaining in the EU extends beyond the current Administration. The cross-party House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee said that their discussions for an inquiry in 2014 with a wide range of leading US politicians:

"left [them] in little doubt that US policy-makers would prefer to see the UK remain an EU member."^{xiii}

Nick Witney, the British former chief executive of the European Defence Agency, has said:

"It would take a bold [supporter of] Out to argue that Britain's defence and security interests would be best served by ignoring US interests and preoccupations. We have a fundamental national interest in keeping the US interested in and engaged with Europe: and weakening the EU by a retreat into isolationism would be exactly the wrong way to go about it."^{xiv}

4. Being in reduces the demands on the UK military: Bosnia

As a member, the UK is in a strong position to ensure that EU security missions meet British interests, or are ones that the UK would have wanted to carry out anyway. The UK can veto the launch of any mission that it does not support. But each EU state's practical participation in, and contribution to, such missions is voluntary. This means that through the EU the UK can meet its security interests with a reduced burden on its own military.

For example, the Government's 2015 National Security Strategy identified threats to the security and stability of the Western Balkans as a risk.^{xv} The EU has a peacekeeping mission in Bosnia to help preserve stability there. The Government's National Security Strategy said that the mission:

“makes an important contribution to peace and stability in the Western Balkans”.^{xvi}

The ability to work with other EU countries and pool resources maximises collective capabilities and increases the likelihood of operational success.

The Government's 2013 EU Balance of Competences Review in foreign and defence policy reported evidence that:

“[EU] military ... missions contribute to burden-sharing by other Member States, freeing up UK forces for harder, riskier tasks”.^{xvii}

5. Being in strengthens unstable countries through better security forces, making instability and conflict less likely

Most of the EU's security missions overseas do not involve military action. They are often missions to support countries around the world with reform and training in their justice systems, border agencies, police and military.

The EU is running training and reform missions like this in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Libya, the Central Africa Republic, Mali, Niger, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia. Soon after the outbreak of instability in Ukraine, the EU established a mission to help the country with police reform.^{xviii}

Having strong security and justice systems makes instability and conflict less likely. This helps to reduce the 'push' factors that cause migration.

For the UK military, working with partner countries to help strengthen their militaries is part of 'defence engagement'. Under the Government's 2015 National Security Strategy, this is now a core Ministry of Defence task. The Strategy says:

“Through defence engagement, our Armed Forces help build our understanding and increase our influence in regions that matter to us.”^{xix}

6. Being in helps to back security policies with economic and development ones: Somalia

The Government has said that:

“The political, security and defence aspects of international relations are increasingly interdependent with the broader aspects of foreign policy, such as international trade, energy, transport and environment relationships.”^{xx}

Because it has a role across such fields, the EU is well-placed to help its member states use the full range of external policies to pursue their interests. This helps to back up – or make unnecessary – the efforts of military forces.

The Government’s 2013 EU Balance of Competences Review found that:

“... [the evidence] suggested that an important comparative advantage for the EU in foreign policy is its ability to combine with its diplomatic and security tools a wide range of policy instruments: political, economic, development, and humanitarian”.^{xxi}

Somalia provides an example of the EU bringing a range of policies to bear on a challenging environment, where the UK has interests at stake in keeping international shipping lanes open and safe.

The UK has taken the lead in international and EU policy in Somalia. EU engagement there includes a maritime operation against piracy off the coast (commanded from Northwood), funding for the African Union stabilisation force AMISON, a training mission to help the Somali military, another training mission to help develop coast guard forces in several states in the region, and significant development assistance.

The European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), a leading independent think-tank, concluded in its 2016 European Foreign Policy Scorecard that:

“the EU’s direct and indirect contributions to Somali security continued to underpin the country’s gradual return to stability in 2015.”^{xxii}

7. Being in strengthens the use of EU economic sanctions, making armed conflict less likely: Russia and Iran

The EU is the world’s largest economic bloc. As such, its economic weight is its most significant international asset. Economic sanctions are one of its most powerful foreign policy tools, as a means of applying pressure to other countries without resorting to war. Being able to bring the other 27 countries of the EU on board significantly increases the impact of economic sanctions that the UK might apply on its own.

The EU has applied economic sanctions as part of its policy towards two of the world’s most strategically important countries, Russia and Iran. In both Russia and Iran, the UK was at the forefront in pushing the EU sanctions policy. On Iran, the Government’s 2013 EU Balance of Competences Review in foreign and defence policy concluded that:

“The UK, with France and Germany in particular, has been highly influential in shaping the internal EU policy debate on Iran sanctions, on both the nuclear dossier and human rights. Without UK influence, both regimes would be much less far-reaching.”^{xxiii}

On Russia, the Government has said that the EU adopted sanctions at the UK’s “urging”,^{xxiv} and the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), a leading independent think-tank, in its 2016 European Foreign Policy Scorecard classified the UK as a “leader” among the EU countries in “maintaining a strong and united sanctions policy”.^{xxv}

In 2015, after years of talks, the sanctions-and-negotiations strategy saw the international community and Iran reach an agreement that will provide reassurance on the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear activity. Sanctions are being lifted, UK businesses have new opportunities in Iran, and military action is off the agenda.

The ECFR called the Iran deal the “diplomatic triumph of the year”.^{xxvi}

In its 2015 National Security Strategy, the Government said:

“International economic sanctions have proved their effectiveness as part of wider efforts to uphold agreements and laws, and inflict a cost on those who breach them. Sanctions, including those coordinated through the EU, helped bring Iran to the negotiating table and are an essential element of our response to Russia’s actions in Ukraine.”^{xxvii}

Discussing the effectiveness of sanctions, the Government’s 2013 EU Balance of Competences Review in foreign and defence policy concluded that:

“There is ... no other alliance through which the UK could achieve the same or better results, given the economic weight of the EU.”^{xxviii}

8. Being in strengthens our policy against ISIL/Daesh in Syria and Iraq

The EU is supporting the UK Government’s strategy against ISIL/Daesh in Syria and Iraq, as part of overall EU policy towards the region.

In Syria, the EU is supporting the negotiations process aimed at bringing an end to the violence and eventually securing a political settlement. It has applied sanctions against individuals responsible for the violence, and is supporting efforts to document human rights abuses so as to allow those responsible to be held to account. The EU has said that it “stands ready” to provide on-the-ground assistance as soon as there is a cessation of hostilities.^{xxix}

In the meantime, the EU and its member states collectively are the largest donors of humanitarian aid, stabilisation and development assistance, including to help refugees in Syria’s neighbours. The EU has established a dedicated Syria Trust Fund to channel member states’ assistance to those affected by the conflict. The EU and its member states have mobilised nearly £4 billion in assistance so far.^{xxx}

In Iraq, the EU has contributed over £775 million in humanitarian, reconstruction and development assistance since 2003, and has earmarked a further £58 million by 2020.^{xxxii} It has a partnership and Cooperation Agreement in place as a framework for relations with Iraq, and has indicated that it could launch a new mission to help build Iraq's counter-terrorism capabilities.^{xxxiii}

The EU is also taking its own measures to counter radical Islamist propaganda, and to stem the flow of foreign fighters into and from Syria.

9. Being in the EU strengthens the UK's counter-terrorism effort and intelligence-sharing

As a member of the EU, the UK's policy against terrorism is stronger.

The EU provides arrangements for its member states to share intelligence and cooperate which are vital to UK national security.

If the UK were to leave the EU, we would lose our automatic right to participate in these schemes. As a result, we would be more vulnerable to cross-border crime, including terrorism.

Some of the most valuable EU arrangements are the European Arrest Warrant, which enables countries to deport suspected criminals, the Schengen Information System, which facilitates intelligence-sharing between EU member states, and Europol, an EU agency that strengthens cooperation between police forces across Europe.

The British Director of Europol has said that fighting crime and terrorism in the UK would be more costly and "much less effective" if the UK leaves the EU.^{xxxiii}

Furthermore, under current arrangements Britain conducts border controls at French rather than UK borders. The French Interior Minister has made clear that this could be lost if we leave, saying leaving could "result in countermeasures."^{xxxiv} This would make the UK less safe, as it would move checkpoints and controls from Calais to our own shores.

Justice and Home Affairs, where counter-terrorism work falls, is an area where the UK has the best of both worlds. The UK opts out of 45 (and opts in to 87)^{xxxv} EU measures in this area, showing we have the flexibility to cooperate at a European level where we determine that it is in our national interests and security needs to do so.

We do not know what counter-terrorism arrangements the UK would have with EU Member States if we were to leave. It is clear, for example, that intelligence-sharing arrangements would be slower and more limited than they are under current arrangements.

10. Being in strengthens the UK defence industry

The UK defence sector directly employs around 146,000 people and generates exports worth around £7.4 billion each year – over a third of the industry's turnover.^{xxxvi}

As long as the UK is in the EU, the defence industry benefits from the same free access to the European free trade single market and the EU's free trade agreements around the world as other sectors.

The main industry body, ADS, wants Britain to remain in the EU. It says:

“Our companies are clear that the UK's continued membership of the EU is good for companies, their employees and the future prosperity of the country.”^{xxxvii}

Analysis commissioned by ADS from KPMG showed that of ADS members surveyed, 73% said that EU membership was good for their business and 86% that they would vote for Britain to remain in.^{xxxviii}

ADS members identified easy access to markets and influence over EU regulations as among the leading benefits of EU membership for the sector.^{xxxix}

ADS President Paul Everitt said:

“UK influence on regulation is generally perceived to be positive, pragmatic and pro-market. ... irrespective of whether we vote in or out, Britain will still have to comply with the regulations.”^{xl}

Nigel Stein, chief executive of FTSE-100 listed aerospace parts suppliers GKN, said:

“Industry in the UK is operating on a global stage and EU membership gives it the opportunity to participate in decision-making.”^{xli}

ADS members also identified access to EU research and development funding as among the top benefits of EU membership for the UK defence industry. The sector receives nearly £100m in EU research and development investment a year.^{xlii} The study showed that Britain could expect to receive almost £2 billion in funding for space research and development by 2021 if it remains in the EU.

ADS has also highlighted the importance of continued British influence over the European Defence Agency (EDA). The EDA is the main forum through which the EU is working to improve EU states' defence capabilities and encourage joint research, development and procurement in the defence sector. The EDA board is made up of EU countries' defence ministers. Outside the EU, the UK Defence Secretary would lose his seat on the EDA board.

ADS told the Government's 2013 EU Balance of Competences Review in foreign and defence policy that Britain should stay an EDA member:

“to ensure that British industry interests at [Agency] level are protected and have influence.”^{xliii}

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ADS said that the EDA had “come to perform a useful role as a ‘marriage-broker’ between Member States ... some of the [Agency’s] capability projects have yielded tangible results.”^{xliv}

Nigel Stein of GKN, Paul Kahn, the President of Airbus Group UK, and Sir Roger Carr, Chairman of BAE Systems, were among the business leaders who signed the open letter published on February 23, 2016, backing continued EU membership.^{xliv}

ⁱ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/227437/2901086_Foreign

ⁱⁱ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-35628051>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478933/52309_Cm_916_1_NSS_SD_Review_web_only.pdf p53

^{iv} http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_01/20160129_160128-pr-2016-11-eng.pdf

^v https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/351406/Wales_Summit_Declaration.pdf

^{vi} <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm150708/debtext/150708-0001.htm#15070837000001>

^{vii} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/227437/2901086_Foreign_Policy_acc.pdf p62

^{viii} Jens Stoltenberg on BBC Radio 4 ‘The World at One’, 1 February 2016,

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-35461278>

^{ix} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478933/52309_Cm_916_1_NSS_SD_Review_web_only.pdf

^x <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-33647154>

^{xi} <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/02/02/readout-presidents-call-prime-minister-david-cameron-united-kingdom>

^{xii} <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/02/252486.htm>

^{xiii} <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmfaff/695/695.pdf>

^{xiv} XXX

^{xv} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478936/52309_Cm_916_1_NSS_SD_Review_PRINT_only.pdf p56

^{xvi} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478936/52309_Cm_916_1_NSS_SD_Review_PRINT_only.pdf p56

^{xvii} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/227437/2901086_Foreign_Policy_acc.pdf p66

^{xviii} <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/>

^{xix} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478933/52309_Cm_916_1_NSS_SD_Review_web_only.pdf p49

^{xx} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/227437/2901086_Foreign_Policy_acc.pdf p5

^{xxi} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/227437/2901086_Foreign_Policy_acc.pdf p6

^{xxii} http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR157_SCORECARD_2016.pdf p22

^{xxiii} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/227437/2901086_Foreign_Policy_acc.pdf p49

^{xxiv} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478933/52309_Cm_916_1_NSS_SD_Review_web_only.pdf p18

^{xxv} http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR157_SCORECARD_2016.pdf p148

^{xxvi} http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR157_SCORECARD_2016.pdf p11

^{xxvii} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478933/52309_Cm_916_1_NSS_SD_Review_web_only.pdf p61

^{xxviii} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/227437/2901086_Foreign_Policy_acc.pdf p48

^{xxix} <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/03/16-council-conclusions-eu-regional-strategy-for-syria-and-iraq-as-well-as-the-isil-daesh-threat/>

^{xxx} <http://eeas.europa.eu/syria/>

^{xxxi} http://eeas.europa.eu/iraq/index_en.htm

^{xxxii} <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/03/16-council-conclusions-eu-regional-strategy-for-syria-and-iraq-as-well-as-the-isil-daesh-threat/>

^{xxxiii} <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35524017>

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^{xxxiv} <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11946146/If-Brexit-happens-UK-wont-be-able-to-police-French-borders-to-stop-migrants-warns-France.html>

^{xxxv} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/466227/Option_webpage_update_-_data_-_July_2015.pdf

^{xxxvi} <https://www.adsgroup.org.uk/2015-industry-facts-figures/>

^{xxxvii} <https://www.adsgroup.org.uk/policy-and-media/eu-referendum/>

^{xxxviii} <https://www.adsgroup.org.uk/policy-and-media/eu-referendum/>

^{xxxix} <https://www.adsgroup.org.uk/policy-and-media/eu-referendum/>

^{xl} <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/industry/defence/11666311/Brexit-would-harm-UKs-56bn-aerospace-and-defence-industry.html>

^{xli} <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/industry/defence/11666311/Brexit-would-harm-UKs-56bn-aerospace-and-defence-industry.html>

^{xlii} <https://www.adsgroup.org.uk/policy-and-media/eu-referendum/eu-investment-in-uk/>

^{xliii} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/227437/2901086_Foreign_Policy_acc.pdf pp 65-66

^{xliiii} https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/227437/2901086_Foreign_Policy_acc.pdf pp 65-66

^{xliv} http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/letters/article4696807.ece?acs_cjd=true

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