

Think
new things
Make
new connections

Programme

Advancing EU–UK Cooperation: Charting a Path to the 2025 Summit and Beyond

28-29 March 2025

*Participants and observers are reminded of the private and confidential basis on which Ditchley Foundation discussions are held. All those participating do so in their personal capacities, not as spokespeople for any country or institution. All proceedings take place under the 'Ditchley Rule', whereby all contributions are unattributable and interventions are made in strict confidence; this also applies to exchanges that take place outside the formal sessions. Those present are free to draw afterwards on the substance of what has been said, but not under any circumstances to reveal to any person not participating in the conference who it was that said it. The Rule will be scrupulously observed in any Note later produced on the conference by Ditchley. The verbal discussions will **not** be recorded.*

A note about the programme:

A largely in-person/residential Ditchley conference, with Ditchley's bespoke 'Bridge' technology permitting the inclusion, via Zoom, of invited speakers.

Legend:

GMT Greenwich Mean Time
CET Central European Time

DITCHLEY

Day 1	Friday 28 March
1230 GMT	<p>Arrivals:</p> <p>Guests arriving by train will be collected from the 1053 service from London Paddington, arriving at Charlbury Station at 1205.</p>
1245 GMT	Lunch
1355 GMT	Participants take their seats in the Library .
PLENARY I	<p>The geopolitical context for EU–UK relations as liberal democratic allies</p> <p><i>How should the EU and UK respond to the Trump Administration’s combative foreign and trade policy? How can they coordinate their responses? What kind of relationship do the EU and UK want with Beijing and other partners in this new global context?</i></p>
1400 GMT	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Director, James Arroyo, opens the conference and explains how proceedings will unfold.</p> <p>Introductions</p> <p>Director introduces the Speakers</p> <p>Speakers TBC</p>
	<p>After introductory remarks from the Speakers, interventions are invited from the participants.</p> <p>Please raise your nameplate to indicate that you would like to speak. Your active participation in the discussion is encouraged.</p>
1520 GMT	Closing remarks
1530 GMT	Tea and coffee in the Saloon and group photo outside (weather permitting).
1555 GMT	Participants take their seats in the Library .
PLENARY II	<p>Building European defence capability</p> <p><i>What are the prospects for multilateral cooperation on defence production, containment of Russian hybrid warfare, and agreeing on security guarantees for Ukraine? How can increased defence capabilities be financed?</i></p>
1600 GMT	<p>Introductions</p> <p>The Director introduces the Speakers</p> <p>Speakers TBC</p>

	<p>After introductory remarks from the Speakers, interventions are invited from the participants.</p> <p>Please raise your nameplate to indicate that you would like to speak. Your active participation in the discussion is encouraged.</p>
1720 GMT	Closing remarks
1730 GMT	Tea and coffee in the Saloon.
1755 GMT	Participants take their seats in the Library .
PLENARY III	<p>Towards economic and energy security for Europe</p> <p><i>How can we manage the Trade and Cooperation Agreement effectively? What are the opportunities for deeper cooperation on energy, climate and technology? How should the EU and UK handle the strategic competition with China, including in terms of critical supply chains and digital infrastructure?</i></p>
1800 GMT	<p>Introductions</p> <p>The Director introduces the Speakers</p> <p>Speakers TBC</p>
	<p>After introductory remarks from the Speakers, interventions are invited from the participants.</p> <p>Please raise your nameplate to indicate that you would like to speak. Your active participation in the discussion is encouraged.</p>
1920 GMT	Closing remarks
1930 GMT	<p>Close</p> <p>Drinks in the White Drawing Room</p>
2015 GMT	<p>Dinner</p> <p><i>Seating plan displayed in the Hall</i></p>

Day 2	Saturday 29 March
0800-0900 GMT	Breakfast
0910 GMT	Participants take their seats in their breakout groups .
<p>Small group discussions – session one</p> <p>The participants will separate into two working groups for two sessions to be able to go into more detail in the discussion. Group A will focus on defence and security cooperation, while Group B will discuss cooperation in terms of economic and energy security.</p>	

Working Group A: Defence and security cooperation

How to strengthen the defence and security coordination between the EU and the UK with regards to the war in Ukraine and wider European security given volatile commitments from the US? What forms of cooperation are the most effective in this context? How can EU-NATO coordination be improved? Should the UK engage in EU-wide initiatives or is it more straightforward to be involved in those led by individual countries, capitalising on bilateral and minilateral agreements? What can be done to revive the European defence industrial base and strengthen cooperation? Should the UK seek integration with the EU’s ecosystem for defence research and capability development and procurement (EDF, ASAP, EDIRPA)? If so, can the constraints on UK participation in the EU financing projects, such as the European Defence Industrial Programme be addressed through bespoke frameworks? Given the need for large-scale defence investment, what financing models are available?

Working Group B: Economic and energy security

How should the EU and UK cooperate to ensure prosperity and resilience of their economies? Taking into account the constraints of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, where are the potential areas for cooperation and coordination beyond it? How can we reduce friction on trade and mobility within legal, financial and political constraints for the EU and the UK? What can be done to strengthen shared energy security? How to facilitate the development of shared energy projects and linked energy grids? How can the EU and UK remain champions of the green transition while re-industrialising and aiming for lowering energy prices? With the aim of advancing European development of critical emerging technologies such as AI and quantum, how can we build resilient and secure supply chains for these emerging capabilities? How to coordinate industrial strategies to mutual advantage?

0915 GMT

Small group discussion

1030 GMT

Small group discussions end.

1030 GMT

Tea and coffee in the Saloon or walk of the grounds.

1110 GMT

Participants return to their **breakout groups**.

Small group discussions – session two

1115 GMT

Small group discussion

1230 GMT

Small group discussions end.

1245 GMT

Lunch

PLENARY IV

Report Back from Working Groups

1400 GMT

Introductions

The Director welcomes everyone back.

The Chair of each small discussion group will provide the main points, as they see them, to have emerged from their discussion, before the remaining members of that group are invited to add their comments. Each session will last approximately 30 minutes, following which the discussion will open into plenary.

1400 GMT	Presentations from the working groups Working group A
1430 GMT	
1500 GMT	Rapporteur's comments
1515 GMT	Reflections and next steps
1545 GMT	Discussion closes
1545 GMT	Tea and coffee in the Saloon
1645 GMT	Departures: Transport leaves Ditchley for Charlbury station for the 1711 GMT service to London Paddington, arriving at 1824 GMT .

Luggage

It is helpful if your luggage is labelled with your name, so that your luggage may more easily be directed on arrival and departure.

Please place your baggage (other than hats, coats and hand luggage) outside your bedroom **by 0900 GMT** on Saturday, so that it may be collected and brought to the Hall ready for departure. Individual arrangements will be made should anyone need to leave earlier.

Please note: Luggage will be arranged in the Hall according to whether you are travelling by train, to the airport or by car. Please check that your luggage is in the correct place prior to your departure and avoid placing belongings in the vicinity of luggage destined for the station or airport if that is not where you are travelling.