

Joint Declaration between Prime Minister Meloni and Prime Minister Starmer

Today we, the Prime Ministers of Italy and the United Kingdom, meet in Rome to celebrate the deep friendship between our countries.

Our countries are the closest partners and Allies. But we want to go further still. Today we agreed on our joint ambition to make this relationship count for even more, bilaterally and internationally.

We believe that this strategic relationship between the UK and Italy is more important than ever. In a world of danger and uncertainty, it is vital that Britain and Italy stand together. Here in Rome we agreed some practical measures to make that strategic relationship stronger than it has ever been, in full accordance with Italy's membership of the EU and UK's relationship with the EU.

The UK-Italy Memorandum of Understanding on Bilateral Cooperation gives us a strong foundation. But now we need to go further. Today we set out our ambition for the future: driving growth in both of our economies, and placing the defence and security of our people at the heart of all we do, including in support of Italy's current Presidency of the G7, as well as in the context of the UK's ambition to reset the relationship between the UK and the EU.

We agreed on our determination to defend freedom and democracy. We discussed Russia's illegal war in Ukraine and the hybrid threats the Russian State poses to Europe more widely. We reaffirm our pledge to stand resolutely with Ukraine for as long as it takes. We are determined to contribute to Ukraine's reconstruction, look forward to the conference which Italy will host in 2025, and recalled the importance of delivering on the \$50bn ERA loans the G7 agreed in Apulia.

We discussed the conflict in the Middle East and the need for the release of all hostages, an immediate ceasefire and de-escalation on all sides, and for the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian aid. We reaffirmed our commitment to working closely together and with our European partners to address the new, destabilising, strategic environment. As NATO Allies we reaffirmed our full commitment to NATO and its missions and look forward to the Italian Navy and Italian Airforce participating in UK carrier operations in 2025 and the next meeting of the 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministers.

We agreed the vital importance of our collaborative defence programmes, including GCAP, for our shared national security interests and respective defence industrial capabilities, and we welcome the continued progress we are making. We emphasised the importance of all European partners working together to strengthen European defence industrial resilience. This includes maximising mutual export opportunities, jointly promoting our complex weapons capabilities and supporting multinational initiatives aimed at strengthening NATO and Europe. Effective NATO and EU cooperation will be key in these regards.

Both our countries, together with our European partners, share the same challenges from irregular migration. We will only make progress by working more closely together, including under the auspices of the Rome Process and with our multilateral partners, including the EU's global alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling and the G7 Framework. Within the context of the Rome Process we agreed to jointly promote migration partnerships with countries of origin and transit, whilst also deepening our cooperation through practical

Joint Declaration between Prime Minister Meloni and Prime Minister Starmer

measures, such as voluntary humanitarian returns and to explore further areas of common action.

We will significantly enhance our cross-border cooperation, including through the UK's new Border Security Command, to take down the criminal organisations who profit from putting lives at risk. To this end, we will promote enhanced bilateral cooperation on investigative capacities, engaging relevant authorities in countries of origin, transit, and destination. We will encourage and improve data exchanges. We will utilise a "follow the money" approach to enhance cooperation on asset freezing and confiscation, looking to develop a joint taskforce on combating illicit financial flows. We are committed to going further in dismantling the supply chains of maritime equipment that undermine the security of our borders. We will work together to take stronger prosecutorial action against those criminals behind this vile trade. We will also maximise the opportunities to bring European and global partners together, including where possible through Europol and INTERPOL, to tackle the shared problems of organised immigration crime. We also commit to collaborate on raising awareness and informing potential migrants on the risks associated with migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons, to deter them from embarking on perilous routes. We will leverage the Joint Strategic Security Committee and the Strategic Migration Partnership to keep working together on concrete follow-ups.

We will also work together to cooperate on wider criminal justice matters, by rapidly taking forward consideration of a wider bilateral agreement on enhancing experience sharing and mutual learning across the full breadth of our criminal justice systems, including concluding negotiations on our Prisoner Transfer Agreement.

Our trade relationship is flourishing, with bilateral trade flows worth £50bn. New investment decisions, including the £485m (€574m) announced today, will boost jobs and growth and demonstrate our strong trade relationship. We have agreed that unlocking bilateral trade opportunities and promoting ease of doing business will be a priority for discussions between our Ministers and we look forward to a meeting of Italian and British CEOs in London in early 2025. We agreed to sign a wide-ranging Science MoU, as part of a UK-Italy Science, Innovation and Tech Dialogue, early next year.

The ties between our peoples lie at the heart of the friendship between our countries. Over 600,000 Italians live in the United Kingdom and tens of thousands of British citizens in Italy, with millions more visiting each year. Today the first cohort of UK-Italy Young Leaders from our joint programme launched last year are meeting tech leaders, cultural organisations and business representatives in London. We intend to further enhance cooperation on strengthening people to people links, and we strongly support maximising the existing opportunities for high school students to visit and study in both our countries.

Here today in Rome we commit together to opening an exciting and ambitious new chapter in the long and warm relations between Italy and the United Kingdom, full of promise and opportunity. We look forward to working closely together on this shared endeavour in the months ahead.