



Joint Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria Daniel Mitov and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom Philip Hammond following a meeting on 16 June 2015 in London

“Today we had wide-ranging discussions across the challenges, concerns and interests that we share as strong EU partners and NATO allies.

“We discussed the UK’s EU Reform agenda and the planned EU referendum in the UK. We agreed on the need to develop an EU that is more competitive, democratically accountable and fair to all member states, whether part of the euro or not. We also discussed the need to protect the UK’s welfare system from abuse while acknowledging that free movement of people to work is one of the four fundamental freedoms of the EU. We reaffirmed our ambition: to complete the Single Market in services (including financial services), digital and energy; to reduce the regulatory burden on business, especially Small and Medium Enterprises; and to finalise ambitious Free Trade Agreements, including the EU-US Free Trade Agreement, and to communicate its benefits.

“Today we discussed the political and security threats in the EU’s neighbourhood, including the situations in Ukraine and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). We underlined our commitment to the stability and independence of Ukraine, and the importance of Russia fulfilling its Minsk Agreement obligations in order to resolve the crisis, and the need for further sanctions if it does not. We agreed to cooperate to counter the impact of Russian disinformation. We welcomed the work of the European Commission towards a political agreement in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and urge the parties to work towards implementation.

“We also discussed a range of security threats and the means of managing them. We reaffirmed the strength of our alliance - including through NATO, the cornerstone of our security. We noted the strength of our cooperation in implementing the NATO Readiness Action Plan, including the participation by a UK infantry platoon in Exercise Steadfast Lev (April 2015), and in a further operation this July. We continued our ongoing discussions on our excellent cooperation in tackling the terrorist threat, including from foreign fighters.

“We underlined the importance of tangible progress to improve Europe’s energy security, including through the completion of the internal energy market, the employment of all available low carbon energy sources, and taking a regional approach to completing pipeline infrastructure that enables greater transit and transparency of gas flows.”