

## ***Strengthening UK-EU Ties: Building a Future for the Next Generation***

*Approved at the YEPP Council in Chişinău on 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2025*

*Presented by CDJA, The Netherlands*

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### **Recognising that:**

- The future of Europe must be prioritised over old divisions stemming from Brexit, and there is a growing political will on both sides to “turn the page” on past disputes in favour of a constructive partnership.<sup>1</sup>
- The European Union and the United Kingdom share common values and face similar global challenges that no country can tackle alone – from Russia’s war of aggression in Ukraine to worldwide economic and security threats, which necessitate a united response.
- In the wake of Brexit, the UK’s decision not to associate with the Erasmus+ programme (2021–2027) and the end of free movement between the UK and EU have significantly curtailed opportunities for young people to study, work and travel across the Channel.<sup>2</sup>
- The absence of a dedicated youth mobility agreement since Brexit has become a major sticking point in EU-UK relations.<sup>3</sup> Young Europeans and Britons have faced bureaucratic hurdles and visa restrictions that did not exist before, limiting cultural exchange, job opportunities and people-to-people contact.
- There has been a marked improvement in EU-UK relations since 2024, with a new spirit of goodwill and pragmatism emerging. The new UK Government has worked in good faith to “reset” relations with Brussels and agreed with EU leaders to hold regular EU-UK summits to deepen cooperation.<sup>4</sup>
- The London summit on 19 May 2025 is a pivotal opportunity to convert this improved atmosphere into concrete outcomes.<sup>5</sup> This meeting offers a chance to set a future-oriented agenda and demonstrate that the EU and UK can work together effectively.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/oct/02/starmer-vows-to-turn-page-on-uks-relationship-with-the-eu>

<sup>2</sup> <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/the-uk-and-erasmus>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-youth-mobility-scheme-work-eu-b2718689.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/uk-pm-starmer-heads-brussels-first-conversation-eu-reset-2024-10-01/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-uk-defense-deal-in-sight-at-may-summit/>

### **Acknowledging that:**

- Both parties recognise that their interests converge not only on bilateral matters but also on the global stage. They have issued a joint declaration on “global issues” covering areas such as continued support for Ukraine and improvements to the global trading system. This demonstrates a shared understanding that the EU and UK should work together to uphold the international order, address climate and energy challenges, and respond jointly to crises beyond Europe’s borders.
- Both the EU and the UK have a strong mutual interest in deeper security and defence cooperation, especially given rising global uncertainties. Progress in the defence pact talks is closely intertwined with other areas of negotiation, notably fisheries. EU coastal member states insist that any security agreement must go hand-in-hand with a satisfactory resolution on fishing rights post-Brexit <sup>6</sup>.
- There are immense benefits to be gained from renewed EU-UK cooperation for the youth of both sides. Restoring study, travel and work avenues will allow young people to acquire new skills, learn each other’s languages and cultures, and build lifelong networks.
- Investing in the next generation’s opportunities will pay dividends in greater prosperity and mutual understanding. These experiences will ultimately benefit our economies and societies: participants can bring back valuable skills to their home job markets and help foster a more dynamic, culturally fluent workforce.
- Efforts are underway to establish a “youth opportunity scheme” to facilitate reciprocal mobility. This proposed scheme mirrors the concept of a youth mobility programme and would allow 18- to 35-year-olds (including those in apprenticeships) to live and work in each other’s jurisdictions for up to two years. Any new youth mobility arrangement can be designed as a bespoke, limited programme that respects the UK’s post-Brexit red lines. <sup>7</sup>

### **YEPP calls on:**

- The European Council and the European Commission to prioritise the future of Europe over the divisions of the past. Both sides should use the 19 May 2025 Summit to inaugurate a new era of cooperation that puts shared future interests above old Brexit-era grievances.
- The European Union and the United Kingdom to renew their partnership with a strong focus on youth, fostering opportunity, mobility, and engagement for the next generation; underlines the importance of cooperation in areas crucial to young people and stresses that young people must be at the centre of building a forward-looking, resilient EU-UK relationship.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-uk-defense-deal-in-sight-at-may-summit/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-youth-mobility-scheme-work-eu-b2718689.html>

- The European Commission and the UK Government to prioritize establishing a reciprocal youth mobility scheme without delay, following the recommendation of the EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly.
- The EU institutions and the UK to work towards enhancing education exchange programmes between Britain and Europe. In particular, urging the European Commission and Council to facilitate the United Kingdom's return to the Erasmus+ programme (the EU's flagship scheme for student exchanges) and calls on the UK Government to seriously consider associating with Erasmus+.
- The participants of the summit – in particular the UK Government and the EU (European Council and Member States) – to finalise and sign the proposed EU-UK defence and security pact as a priority outcome of the meeting.
- All sides to focus on building mutual trust by aligning progress on security with fair outcomes in other key areas, such as fisheries. A balanced fisheries agreement would signal a willingness to resolve sensitive issues pragmatically and in good faith, reinforcing the credibility of a broader EU-UK partnership.
- the EU and the UK to intensify their cooperation on global issues and common challenges. For example, the plan for a joint EU-UK declaration on global issues at the summit and calls for this to be translated into concrete joint actions. Both parties should coordinate closely on supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and reconstruction, on enhancing European energy security and climate action, and on addressing international crises through diplomacy and development aid.