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Europe Faculty

Working with Europe and the EU

– A New Context

Practitioner Training for UK Civil Servants

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Working with Europe and the EU – A New Context

3-5 November 2025

Day 2

How does the framework of UK-EU relations work?

- The Strategic Partnership

Prof. Simon Usherwood, Open University



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Getting to the 'Reset'

- Drivers
 - New UK government
 - Demonstration of good faith relations
 - Changing geopolitical environment
- Core ideas
 - Rebuilding of deeper cooperation
 - Problem-solving



Timeline

- Scoping work since summer 2024
- UK-EU Summit, May 2025
- Negotiations from autumn 2025



Security & defence

- Development & disaster cooperation
- Health security
- Maritime security
- Participation in SAFE
- Security & Defence Partnership



Putting people at the heart of the relationship

- Border management/e-gates
- Cultural & artistic exchanges
- Erasmus +
- Youth experience scheme



Strengthening economies

- Competition Cooperation
- Entry for business trips; qualification recognition
- Linkage of Emissions Trading Schemes
- New energy technology regulation
- Participation in EU internal energy market
- Sanitary & Phytosanitary (GB only)

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Internal security

- Agency cooperation
- Europol cooperation
- EU Drugs Agency cooperation
- Information exchange
- Mutual legal assistance

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Irregular migration

- Agency cooperation
- Cooperation on upstream migration
- Exchanges on visa abuses
- Irregular migration cooperation



Other

Fisheries access to 2038

Regular high-level summits



Key structural features of the SP

Medium-term workplan

Nominal discrete elements, but liable to be cross-linked (both internally and with TCA schedules)

Refinements within the basic TCA/WA framework

Key challenges

- Protectionist turns in various states
- Impact of government changes
- Participation in EU work will be without decision-making powers for UK
- Broadening agenda of work risks more cases of cross-blockage

Key points

- Strategic Partnership is how UK-EU relations will work for foreseeable future
 - Low politicisation
 - Standing negotiations
 - No big 'crunch moments'
- Lack of urgency/time constraint both positive and negative
- While incremental, will contribute to continuing discussion about fundamentals of UK-EU relations