



# HOUSE OF LORDS

International Agreements Committee

House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

Tel: 020 7219 4840  
Fax: 020 7219 6715  
hlintagreements@parliament.uk  
www.parliament.uk/lords

The Rt Hon Lord Cameron  
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs  
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

1 March 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you about the “Agreement on Security Cooperation between the UK and Ukraine” which was signed by the Prime Minister on 12 January 2024.

According to the press release on the No 10 website, this document is both “historic” and a “totemic agreement ... intended to be the first step in developing an unshakeable hundred-year partnership between Ukraine and the United Kingdom.” As you will be aware, the Agreement provides for cooperation across a range of important areas, including intelligence sharing, cyber security, medical and military training, and defence and industrial cooperation. It also commits the UK to consult with the Ukraine in the event of further Russian aggression and to provide “swift and sustained assistance” for Ukraine’s defence.

The instrument is described as an “Agreement” but has not been laid before Parliament under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010. Your officials have indicated that it is not intended to be legally binding. The Government’s reply of January 2023 to the International Agreements Committee Report on the Rwanda MOU stated that “*it is the UK Government’s practice to show clearly from the form of the document and its terminology if it intends to create legally binding obligations. The Government guidance published on gov.uk makes this clear. ... [Non-binding instruments] should not include any commitments or language which could be interpreted as legally binding*”. The relevant Government Guidance issued by FCDO starts the section on non-binding instruments with the following sentence: “*The document should not be titled or referred to as an Agreement*”. It seems therefore that if this instrument is not intended to be legally binding the Government has not followed its own guidance.

I would welcome your confirmation of the status of the Agreement on Security Cooperation with Ukraine.

Even if the Ukraine Agreement is intended to be a non-binding instrument, the Government has previously recognised that it may be appropriate to draw to Parliament’s attention “non-legally binding instruments which raise questions of public importance”. This was most recently reiterated in the Government’s reply in January 2023 to the Rwanda MOU Report and in a letter dated 11 May 2022 from the Rt Hon Amanda Milling MP, Minister of State at

the FCDO, to the then Chair of the International Agreements Committee, Baroness Hayter. Please would you explain why the Government did not consider that Ukraine Security Cooperation Agreement, which it has described as both “historic” and “totemic”, and which includes significant commitments by the United Kingdom, was not considered to be of sufficient public importance to warrant drawing to the specific attention of this Committee and of Parliament more widely.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course. The Committee staff are happy to speak to your office to discuss the issue further if needed. Our Committee Clerk Rhiannon Williams may be contacted on 02072 194585 or [williamsrb@parliament.uk](mailto:williamsrb@parliament.uk)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lord Goldsmith', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**The Rt Hon. the Lord Goldsmith KC**

Chair of the House of Lords International Agreements Committee