


Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1994/2210(COS)
A support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland	
Subject 6.10.05 Peace preservation, humanitarian and rescue tasks, crisis management	
Geographical area United Kingdom	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	REGI Regional Policy		25/01/1995
		PSE HUME John	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development		01/02/1995
	PPE NICHOLSON James		
	BUDG Budgets		21/02/1995
		PPE KÖNIG Friedrich	
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy		02/02/1995
		RDE GALLAGHER Pat the Cope	
Council of the European Union			

Key events			
07/12/1994	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1994)0607	Summary
16/01/1995	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
23/03/1995	Vote in committee		Summary
23/03/1995	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0068/1995	
05/04/1995	Debate in Parliament		Summary
06/04/1995	Decision by Parliament	T4-0157/1995	Summary
06/04/1995	End of procedure in Parliament		
01/05/1995	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
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Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
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Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/4/06264

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(1994)0607	07/12/1994	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(1995)0279	14/02/1995	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0068/1995 OJ C 109 01.05.1995, p. 0005	23/03/1995	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0157/1995 OJ C 109 01.05.1995, p. 0099-0158	06/04/1995	EP	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0138/1995 OJ C 100 02.04.1996, p. 0013	21/04/1995	CofR	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES0413/1995 OJ C 155 21.06.1995, p. 0028	27/04/1995	ESC	
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES0580/1995 OJ C 236 11.09.1995, p. 0029	31/05/1995	ESC	

A support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland

This Commission communication to the Council and the European Parliament relates to a support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. The Commission deals in its communication with the new potential created by the cessation of violence in this country and the measures which could be used to respond to this new political situation. According to the Commission's analysis, the best way of taking advantage of this chance for reconciliation would be to launch a special support programme which would have an immediate and lasting impact on the ground and would complement intervention by the Structural Funds. It would be based on the following: - a commitment by the two governments to adapt the programmes implemented under the Structural Funds to the new challenges created by the cessation of violence; - a commitment by the two governments to take maximum advantage of the new political situation when implementing Community initiatives; - a new separate Commission initiative for the benefit of Northern Ireland and the border counties based on support for disadvantaged and marginalised zones in the form of urban and rural regeneration programmes, employment development measures, the development of cross-border activities and social insertion; - extending the benefit of interest rate subsidies on loans granted by the EIB to local SMEs beyond the date currently planned (1 July 1995); - re-evaluating local infrastructures in the context of the trans-European networks (e.g. Newry-border motorway); - ensuring that existing and new political instruments are consistent (e.g. joint funding of programmes with agencies such as the International Fund for Ireland). The Commission feels that the new initiative complementing the Structural Funds should last 5 years, thereby coinciding with the length of Structural Fund programmes and has proposed a budget of ECU 300 million for the first three years (the budget for the last two years will be reviewed on the basis of a Commission report). The main fields of intervention under this initiative will be as follows: - employment, by developing the economy and professional qualifications; - urban and rural regeneration, by promoting extensive local development and a process of economic and social recovery in urban zones, towns and villages (renovation, redevelopment, new small rural infrastructures, parks etc.); - the development of cross-border activities, by strengthening commercial, economic and agricultural cooperation and providing aid for new "joint ventures"; - social insertion, by encouraging cooperation between basic local authorities in the most disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland and in the border counties.?

A support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland

In this draft memorandum to the Member States of the Community, the Commission sets out the guidelines for the special support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. This memorandum complements the Commission communication to the Council and the European Parliament on the same subject. The purpose of the Commission memorandum is to justify the need for this initiative to the Member States and to reiterate the main lines of approach of the programme in question, which has a budget of ECU 300 million for the period from 1995-97 and which the Essen European Council endorsed in December 1994. It will seek to consolidate the new peace process in Northern Ireland by taking action in 5 main areas of intervention: - employment; - urban and rural regeneration; - the

development of cross-border activities; - social insertion; - productive investments and industrial development. At the same time, the Commission includes an open-ended list of measures which qualify for the programme in the above priority areas, together with a proposed breakdown of aid between the areas in question (the Commission proposes a ceiling of 80% for projects in Northern Ireland and no less than 20% for projects implemented in the border counties). At the same time, the Commission feels that at least 15% of overall funding should be earmarked for cross-border activities. In order to implement this programme, the Member States must present detailed proposals for the operational programme within four months of the date of this memorandum (i.e. 14 June 1995). The memorandum sets out the presentation criteria to be used for the operational programme and the objectives on which the proposed projects should be based.

A support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland

The committee unanimously adopted the report by Mr John HUME (PSE, UK) on the special support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. The rapporteur, whose efforts in favour of peace have been acknowledged by the European Parliament, felt that it was most important that this Community initiative should win the support both of the European institutions and the two parties. Parliament supported the objective of the programme, which seeks to ensure that everyone benefits, both in Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and the border counties, and called for the programme to be applied in a balanced and fair manner, giving priority to the most disadvantaged zones and sections of the population. The committee also welcomed the fact that priority had been given to encouraging growth and employment, social insertion, urban regeneration and agricultural development. The rapporteur also felt that it was important to promote cross-border cooperation and industrial development on the basis of comprehensive consultation with local authorities, enterprises, trades union, charities and other groups. The report adopted called for the special and distinct nature of the programme to be highlighted and, more importantly, for the principle of additionality to be applied. It stressed the need for this proposal to be coordinated with other structural measures cofinanced by the Union in this region. In addition, following the adoption of an amendment by the Greens (14 votes for, 13 against and 1 abstention), the report called for action to raise public awareness of the need to protect the natural environment. Stressing the innovative nature of this approach, the rapporteur hoped, when it was implemented, that the need for strict budgetary control would be reconciled with the need for more flexible management. The HUME report is due to be tabled before plenary on 6 April.?

A support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland

All of the Members who spoke in the debate on the EU's programme in favour of peace in Northern Ireland stressed the importance of this initiative. Roberto Speciale, the Chairman of the Committee on Regional Affairs, felt that it demonstrated that the Union was not 'distant and abstract' but 'close to the realities and problems' of the Community. The rapporteur, John HUME (PSE), who had been working towards reconciliation in Northern Ireland for many years, thanked Jacques Delors for having reacted to the peace there so quickly and Mr Santer for having made every effort to push this initiative through. He echoed the words of the other two Members from Northern Ireland (Unionists) with whom he had worked, namely Reverend Paisley and James Nicholson (a joint press conference had been held in Strasbourg by the three Members to highlight this event). According to Mr HUME, the three Members had worked together in total harmony, and he also emphasised the extent to which the Commission had been working 'on the ground' on this matter. Mrs Wulf-Mathies, the Commissioner responsible for regional policy, who was speaking on behalf of the Commission, pointed out that the unique nature of this initiative was consistent with the exceptional situation that had given rise to it. Reconciliation was not possible without the cooperation of all parties on the ground. She noted that throughout the process the parties had shown themselves to be very willing to come to an understanding and in this respect the Commission would be able to take a decision on the initiative in May 1995. She welcomed the EP's proposal to reduce by two months the deadlines for the presentation of specific programmes and stressed the importance of guaranteeing maximum transparency and flexibility when implementing the programme along with effective budgetary control. She added that the Commission was very keen to earmark 15% of the funding for cross-border cooperation on the projects in the interests of the effectiveness of the programme.

A support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland

In its resolution on the Commission communication and the draft memorandum to the Member States on the special aid programme in favour of peace in Northern Ireland, the European Parliament welcomed the speed with which the Commission and the Essen Council had reacted to the peace-keeping agreement in this country in order to support and facilitate lasting peace in Northern Ireland. It considered the Commission proposal to be encouraging and welcomed the fact that the programme gave priority to growth and employment, social inclusion, urban regeneration and cross-border cooperation. At the same time, the European Parliament welcomed the new and comprehensive consultations with local authorities, enterprises and associations in the debate and hoped that this practice would become a permanent feature of the Community initiative. As far as the programme itself is concerned, Parliament was in favour of applying the principle of additionality during the implementation of the programme and called on both the Commission and the Council to coordinate this action with other structural measures cofinanced by the Union. Parliament hoped that this programme would benefit all the communities in the region and would be implemented in a balanced manner both in Northern Ireland and in the border counties. In this sense, the most disadvantaged sections of the population should take priority. The European Parliament also called for all aid projects in Northern Ireland to preserve the natural and cultural environment. Parliament hoped that a certain flexibility would be applied to the daily management of this initiative during implementation, although not at the expense of strict budgetary control, and stated that it was prepared, if necessary, to increase the funding for this programme and called on the Commission to submit proposals along these lines or at least to amend the financial statement accompanying the programme. It also called for the 4 month deadline for local authorities to submit proposals to be reduced to 2 months.?

A support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland

In its Opinion the Committee welcomed the consultation that had been organised as part of this initiative, which had included members of the Committee of the Regions. It underlined the positive role that this initiative could play in the regeneration of deprived areas and in the reconciliation of communities, and emphasised that local authorities would have a pivotal role to play in defining the measures to be financed. The Committee was particularly pleased that at least 15% of the overall amount would be devoted to cross-border activities and that the

funding would be paid directly to the regional and local authorities. Finally, in addition to the measures envisaged, the Committee hoped that it would be possible to fund twinning activities between the three parties concerned. It also hoped that it would be involved in the process to evaluate this initiative.