



**An Chartlann Náisiúnta**  
**National Archives**

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2021/96/25
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
<b>Accession Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Cabinet of Mr. Pádraig FLYNN

Deputy Chief of Cabinet

FAX

Art Agnew please

Brussels, 3 October 1994

BMcD/mp

### MEETING OF TASK FORCE ON NORTHERN IRELAND, 3 OCTOBER 1994

The first meeting of the Commission's Task Force on Northern Ireland was convened by Carlo Trojan on 3 October. The others present, apart from Carlo Trojan and myself, were Colin Budd (Brittan Cabinet), Sue Binns (Millan Cabinet), Chris Boyd (President's Cabinet) and Carol Edwards (Secretariat General).

#### Composition of Task Force

Trojan indicated that representatives of certain services (DGs V, XVI and XIX) would be added to the Task Force. Other services could be added on an ad hoc basis (those dealing with Trans-European networks, the Conesion Fund, the Christophersen Group and DG VI were mentioned). The heads of the Commission offices in Dublin, Belfast and London will be invited to the next meeting. Tom O'Dwyer will also be invited (whether to the next meeting or on an on-going basis was not clear). We and the Millan Cabinet were asked to nominate senior representatives of DG V and DG XVI. At the end of the meeting, Trojan suggested that the Directors General of the two DGs might attend the next meeting which has been scheduled for Friday 14 October at 10.30. Chris Boyd suggested that the EIB might be involved as appropriate. Carol Edwards of the Secretariat General is to provide the secretariat for the Task Force. (Trojan, in discussing who would participate in the Task Force, mentioned three areas as being of particular importance: the Structural Funds, social policy outside the Structural Funds and the TENs).

### Timing

Trojan said that the initial task was to draw up, in consultation with the two Governments, the package of measures which had been referred to in the recent Commission press release and speech in the Parliament.

As regards timing, Trojan envisaged the package being brought forward before the end of the year and if possible before the European Council. There was general agreement to this suggestion. I said that it would be important to take into account the views of the two Governments about the precise timing. I said also that we saw the Task Force as having an ongoing role during the next Commission and not one which would end when the proposed package was brought forward. Chris Boyd seemed to query whether the Task Force, as such, would continue beyond this Commission but Trojan agreed that it would probably be involved in an ongoing exercise since the Commission would continue to have a role.

### Content of Package

Trojan said that the package would not involve only "old wine in new barrels". There should be "something old, something new, something borrowed". There would have to be something in the package for both communities in Northern Ireland and for both Governments. There would be a refocussing of "old" money as well as some "new" money. The latter did "not need to be much". The recent letter from the British indicated their priorities including urban regeneration. There should be a focus on better relations between the two communities in relation to which programmes in the field of social exclusion would be relevant. As far as the South was concerned transnational cooperation and networks between the two parts of Ireland would be of particular interest.

3

Trojan said that the recent note from Millan had been too defensive. There was no criticism of Millan in relation to what had been negotiated. The question was how to achieve a practical and psychological impact within present instruments. Trojan seemed to see presentational advantages in presenting a new measure rather than merely an adaptation of old measures.

Sue Binns said that they did not think that the British approach suggesting a new Community Initiative (for which there was "no new money") was the right one. Why not consider a separate budget line? Chris Boyd echoed her point about a new budget line. I said that at the present stage of the exercise we should keep all options open and continue to consult with the two Governments. I said that Trojan's identification of certain fields for consideration was a good starting point. The fact was that there was a very considerable amount of money in the Community Initiatives reserve and the option of having recourse to that was one of those which should remain under consideration. There were numerous possibilities which could be considered including, for example, the possibility of locating a small Community body in Belfast (such as one of the sub-offices of the new Environment agency).

Trojan said we could perhaps find "10 MECU in rubric 3". In this context he mentioned DG V and the TENs. Sue Binns saw advantage in a major flagship project and she mentioned the recent idea of locating a campus of the University of Ulster in West Belfast. She thought that the idea of locating a Community body in Belfast or contracting out by the Commission of some distance-working should be considered. Chris Boyd said that "10 MECU" of new money was the maximum which the Director-General of DG XIX would contemplate. Trojan's approach seemed to be that the British focus on Belfast was a good one. The Commission could take account of what we were doing under Urban and the IFI and add in something under social exclusion and present the overall package as a visible flagship project. An additional 5 to 10 MECU might be found in rubric 3. It would be better if the new proposals did not necessarily involve the Council. He did not exclude the extension of Interreg to cover Belfast. Chris Boyd said that one advantage of a Community Initiative for Belfast was that it might be perceived as less "green" than the IFI given that the majority in Belfast were Protestants. He

also mentioned the possible application of KONVER in Northern Ireland (i.e. application to ex-policemen) although Trojan saw this as a possibility only in the longer term.

I said that reference had been made to 10 MECU. This seemed very thin given the importance of what was at stake and the importance which the Parliament attached to Community support for the peace process. Clearly the package would involve some repackaging and re-presenting of existing funding but as regards additional funding we should keep all our options open, including under the Community Initiatives, until they had been considered and until the two Governments had been consulted.

Consultation of Governments

As regards consultation of the two Governments, Trojan said he would be discussing further with the two Permanent Representatives on Thursday. When he had more raw material he intended to visit Belfast and Dublin. He seemed particularly anxious to obtain views directly from government representatives in Belfast and referred to previous problems with additionality (Colin Budd commented that he would be surprised if there were any differences regarding priorities between London and Belfast but, if there were, these would be sensitive).

Chris Boyd mentioned that a Task Force had already been set up in Belfast and in the United States and one was likely to be set up in Dublin. It was important to ensure coordination.



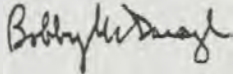
Wider consultation

Chris Boyd referred to the fact that Mr Flynn had announced in Belfast the setting up of the Task Force. This was seen on the ground in Northern Ireland as being of the greatest importance. Expectations and interest were now very high. Europe's role now had a high profile. He thought it was desirable that the Commission should be open to a wider consultation and show that it was prepared to listen. It should consider the possibility of a hearing in Belfast or of inviting submissions. Trojan referred to the risks of raising expectations. He seemed to envisage that the proposed package would be brought forward in consultation with the two Governments and that wider consultation at grass roots level could take place at a later stage. I said that I agreed with the thrust of what Chris Boyd had said. Submissions should be welcomed. Certainly in the medium-term there should be a wide consultation. It remained to be seen what degree of wider consultation would be possible in the short-term leading to the adoption of a package of measures this year. The importance of encouraging grass roots interest was not just that it was good for the Commission in enhancing its profile, but more importantly that the whole purpose of the exercise of promising and providing Community support was to encourage those on the ground that practical support would be forthcoming in support of the peace process. Trojan will seek the views of the two Permanent Representatives in this matter and seems to envisage meeting and having lunch with certain representatives of umbrella non-governmental organisations when he visits Belfast.

6

Colln Budd referred to a conference organised by Ken Bloomfield which David Williamson would be attending in Belfast in January.

On Trans-European Networks Trojan and Boyd referred to the possibility of including or bringing forward in time an additional project of relevance to the Island of Ireland.



Bobby McDonagh

Copy: Commissioner  
Joe Broonan  
Hywel Jones