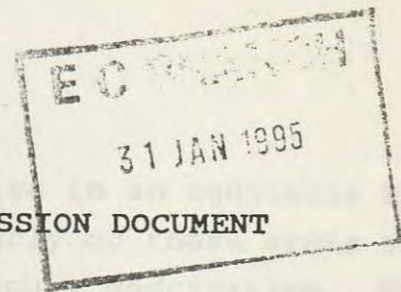


*all depts
1994 - peace divided*



*cc to C. Cavanagh
31/1/95*



EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM ON A EUROPEAN COMMISSION DOCUMENT

Document 12107/94 of 15 December 1994: communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament about the special support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

Submitted by the Northern Ireland Office

27th January 1995

Subject Matter

1. Shortly after the cessation of terrorist violence in Northern Ireland, a special Commission Task Force was established to consider ways of giving practical assistance to Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland. The Task Force concluded that the European Union had a clear interest and vital role to play in maintaining the momentum for peace by means of a special support programme. Accordingly, a package of economic assistance for Northern Ireland and the border counties in Ireland was announced by President Delors on 7 December and endorsed at the Essen Council on 9 December. Document 12107/94 sets out those Commission proposals.

2. The proposed special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland is a new and distinct package of Community assistance to Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic aiming to contribute to the reconciliation, and social and economic recovery of the area. The programme is due to run for 5 years from 1995 to 1999. Funding of 300 mecu (£233 at £1 : 1.29 ecu conversion rate) is proposed for the first three years, further additional funding for the last two years being subject to a review on the basis of a Commission Report.



3. The funding will benefit all communities in an equitable and balanced way, while focusing more particularly on those areas and sections of the population suffering most acute deprivation. The priority areas for support are urban and rural regeneration, employment, cross-border development and social inclusion.

Ministerial Responsibility

4. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has primary responsibility because the proposal is concerned with assistance to Northern Ireland. The President of the Board of Trade has UK responsibility for Structural Funds and Community Initiatives.

Legal and Procedural Issues

5. No legal or procedural issues are raised by the deposited document.

Policy Implications

6. The additional package of assistance is welcomed by the Government. Local interests will be consulted during the process of drawing up a programme with the Commission.

Timetable

7. The Commission has since 9 December embarked upon the process of drawing up guidelines for the programme and Northern Ireland officials are maintaining close contact with the Commission. Once that has been done it is proposed to consult widely on the proposals.

A. B. B. Mayhew

The Rt Hon Sir Patrick Mayhew QC MP
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