Continuation of the territorial cooperation programmes PEACE IV and United Kingdom-Ireland in the context of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU

2018/0432(COD) - 19/12/2018 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to continue the territorial cooperation programmes PEACE IV in Northern Ireland until the end of 2020, in the absence of an agreement for the United Kingdom to withdraw from the European Union.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: on 13 December 2018, the European Council (Article 50) renewed its call to intensify work on preparing, at all levels, for the consequences of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the Union, taking into account all possible outcomes.

In response to this call, this Regulation is part of a package of emergency measures proposed by the Commission in view of the uncertainty in the United Kingdom regarding the ratification of the withdrawal agreement.

The withdrawal shall occur during the programming period 2014-2020 in which the United Kingdom is participating in fifteen programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal ('cooperation programmes').

Two of those programmes are programmes involving Northern Ireland and supporting peace and reconciliation and North-South cooperation under the ‘Good Friday Agreement’ that the Union intends to continue even if the United Kingdom withdraws from the Union without a withdrawal agreement having entered into force by the date the Treaties cease to apply to and in the United Kingdom.

CONTENT: this proposal aims to ensure the **continuation of two bilateral cooperation programmes** involving Ireland namely: (i) the PEACE IV (Ireland-United Kingdom) programme and; (ii) the United Kingdom-Ireland (Ireland-Northern Ireland-Scotland) programme.

Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 shall continue to apply to the cooperation programmes subject to the provisions of this Regulation. By way of derogation from Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013:

- the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) hosting the managing authority and the certifying authority of the PEACE IV (Ireland-United Kingdom) and the United Kingdom - Ireland (Ireland-Northern Ireland-Scotland) Programmes shall continue to exercise its functions;

- the Department of Finance of Northern Ireland shall remain the audit authority of these programmes.

The Regulation shall apply from the date following the date on which the Treaties cease to apply to and in the United Kingdom. It shall not apply if a withdrawal agreement concluded with the United Kingdom has entered into force by that date.

BUDGETARY IMPACT: the proposed Regulation has no financial implications. Both programmes shall continue to be financed from the Union's budget. The possibility to execute the necessary controls and audits in all participating regions will need to be confirmed by an agreement between the Commission and the authorities of the United Kingdom and will constitute a condition for financing.