International Fund for Ireland : financial contributions and evaluation report

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The Committee adopted the report by Antoni GUTIÉRREZ DÍAZ (EUL/NGL, E) on the International Fund for Ireland. The Commission wishes renew the EU's contribution to the Fund for two more years and set the level of this contribution at ECU 17 million per year. The proposal expressly mentions the Community "Peace" initiative programme, which has the same objectives as the Fund. The Commission aims to ensure coordination between projects financed from these two sources and the Committee wishes to ensure coordination between the Fund's activities and those financed by Community structural policies (e.g. Interreg). The report calls for the Fund to be made more effective by ensuring that the finance it provides is additional and not a substitute for other public or private expenditure. The EU's contribution to the Fund should be adequately publicized. The Fund, which was set up in 1987, receives contributions from a number of countries, including the USA (1996: 37%), Canada (1%) and Australia (2%). The EU is the largest contributor, having given ECU 15 million per year between 1989 and 1994 and ECU 20 million per year between 1995 and 1997. The aim of the Fund is to promote peace and reconciliation in Ireland by granting financial support to economic and social development measures based on cooperation between the two communities in Northern Ireland and cross-border cooperation between the latter and the Republic of Ireland.