A support programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland

1994/2210(COS) - 14/02/1995 - Document attached to the procedure

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.