International Fund for Ireland: continuation of the Community financial contributions for 2005-2006

2004/0228(CNS) - 24/01/2005 - Final act

PURPOSE : to provide new Community financial contributions to the International Fund for Ireland (2005-2006).

COMMUNITY MEASURE : Council Regulation 177/2005/EC concerning Community financial contributions to the International Fund for Ireland (2005-2006).

CONTENT : this Regulation sets out a financial reference amount for the implementation of the Community contribution to the International Fund for Ireland for the period 2005-2006 shall be

EUR 30 million.

The contribution shall be used by the Fund in accordance with the Agreement of 18 September 1986 between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning the International Fund for Ireland. In allocating the contribution the Fund shall give priority to projects of a cross-border or cross-community nature, in such a way as to complement the activities financed by the Structural Funds, and especially those of the Special Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland set up in accordance with the first subparagraph of Article 7(4) of Regulation 1260/1999/EC.

The contribution shall be used in such a way as to bring about sustainable economic and social improvement in the areas concerned. It shall not be used as a substitute for other public and private expenditure.

The Commission shall represent the Community as an observer at the meetings of ‘the Board' of the Fund.

The Fund shall be represented as an observer at the Monitoring Committee meetings of the PEACE Programme, and of other Structural Funds interventions as appropriate.

The Commission shall, in cooperation with the Fund's Board, determine appropriate publicity and information procedures in order to publicise the Community's contribution to the projects

financed by the Fund.

By 31 March 2006, the Commission shall submit a report to the Budgetary Authority, assessing the results of the activities of the Fund and the need for continuing contributions beyond 2006, taking into account developments in the peace process in Northern Ireland. That report shall incorporate, inter alia, the following: a survey of the Fund's activities; a list of projects which have received aid; an assessment of the nature and impact of the Fund's activities, notably in relation to its objectives and the criteria laid down in Articles 2 and 7; an assessment of action taken by the Fund to ensure cooperation and coordination with Structural Funds interventions, taking account, in particular, of obligations under Articles 3 and 4; an annex setting out the results of the verifications and controls carried out by the Commission pursuant to the undertaking referred to in Article 6.

The Commission shall administer the contributions. The annual contribution shall be paid in installments as follows:

- a first advance payment of 40 % shall be made after the Commission has received an undertaking, signed by the Chairman of the Fund's Board, to the effect that the Fund will comply with the conditions for the grant of the contribution set out in this Regulation;

- a second advance payment of 40 % shall be made six months later;

- a final payment of 20 % shall be made after the Commission has received and accepted the Fund's annual activity report and audited accounts for the year in question.

Before paying out an installment the Commission shall carry out an assessment of the Fund's financial needs on the basis of the Fund's cash balance at the time scheduled for each payment. If, following that assessment, the Fund's financial needs do not justify payment of one of those installments, the payment concerned shall be suspended. The Commission shall review that decision on the basis of new information provided by the Fund and shall continue payments as soon as they are considered justified.

A contribution from the Fund may be allocated to an operation which receives or is due to receive financial assistance under a Structural Funds intervention, only if the sum of that financial assistance, plus 40 % of the contribution from the Fund, does not exceed 75 % of the operation's total eligible costs.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : 01/01/2005. It shall expire on 31 December 2006.