Basic information

2004/0228(CNS) CNS - Consultation procedure Regulation	Procedure completed
International Fund for Ireland: continuation of the Community financial contributions for 2005-2006 **Subject** 6.10.05 Peace preservation, humanitarian and rescue tasks, crisis management **Geographical area** Ireland	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
REGI Regional Development	NICHOLSON James (PPE-DE)	24/11/2004

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
BUDG Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	26/10/2004

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Agriculture and Fisheries	2635	2005-01-24

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Regional and Urban Policy	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
13/10/2004	Legislative proposal published	COM(2004)0632	Summary
25/11/2004	Vote in committee		Summary
10/12/2004	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A6-0071/2004	
14/12/2004	Decision by Parliament	T6-0092/2004	Summary

14/12/2004	Results of vote in Parliament		
14/12/2004	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
24/01/2005	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
24/01/2005	End of procedure in Parliament		
03/02/2005	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2004/0228(CNS)
Procedure type	CNS - Consultation procedure
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Regulation
Legal basis	EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 308
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/6/24351

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A6-0071/2004	10/12/2004	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T6-0092/2004 OJ C 226 15.09.2005, p. 0023-0049 E	14/12/2004	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(2004)0632	13/10/2004	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2006)0563	12/10/2006	Summary

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Regulation 2005/0177
OJ L 030 03.02.2005, p. 0001-0003 Summary

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

2004/0228(CNS) - 13/10/2004 - Legislative proposal

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

PROPOSED ACT : Council Regulation.

CONTENT : the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) was established in 1986 in order to contribute to the implementation of Article 10(a) of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 15 November 1985 which provides that the two governments shall co-operate to promote the economic and social development of those areas of both parts of Ireland which have suffered most severely from the consequences of the instability of recent years, and shall consider the possibility of securing international support for this work. The objectives of the IFI are to promote economic and social advance and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout Ireland. EC funding now represents 44 % of annual contributions to the Fund and 39,5 % of cumulative contributions to date.

The political background of the region has evolved over the years: in 1994, the main paramilitary groups announced cease-fires ; in April 1998, the Belfast ("Good Friday") Agreement set a political settlement for a peace process, including the devolution of powers to a Northern Ireland (NI) Assembly and Executive Committee, which were set up at the end of 1999. However, there is still a significant level of violence relating to the conflict and division between the main communities remains high. The NI Assembly is currently suspended, which illustrates the threats and uncertainties surrounding the peace process in the region.

In this context, economic and social development in support of peace and reconciliation at grassroots level is a long term process. As an instrument towards this goal, the IFI complements the action carried out by the EU Programmes for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland ("PEACE "I 1995-1999, and" PEACE "II 2000-2004).

In June 2004 the European Council called on the Commission to examine the possibility of aligning interventions under the PEACE Programme and the International Fund for Ireland with those of the other programmes under the Structural Funds that come to an end in 2006, including the implications in financial terms.

In accordance with the current round of contributions, the European Commission has also submitted an assessment of the IFI's activities to the Budgetary Authority. This acknowledges the IFI's very valuable and positive actions for peace and reconciliation in the region.

In light of the above assessment, it is proposed that the Commission adopts the following proposal for a Council Regulation on the EC contributions to the IFI which will continue the EU contributions of EUR 15 million per year to the IFI, for a further period of 2 years. The proposed new period will therefore end in 2006, which would coincide with the end of the extended PEACE Programme (please refer to procedure reference AVC/2004/0224).

Also to be taken account of are the observations made in the Commission report, in particular those

reinforcing synergy of objectives and co-ordination with Structural Funds interventions, in particular with an extended PEACE Programme.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS :

- Budget line concerned : B2-604.

- Period of application : 2005-2006.

- Total allocation for action (excluding administrative and human resource expenditure): EUR 30 million for commitment.

- Financial impact on human resources : EUR 32 400 per year.

- Other administrative expenditure : EUR 9000 per year.

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.

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

2004/0228(CNS) - 12/10/2006 - Follow-up document

PURPOSE: to present the Commission report on the International Fund for Ireland.

CONTENT: this report on the activities of the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) is required under Council Regulation 177/2005/EC which provided for the continuation of the funding of the IFI for the period 2005-2006. The primary purpose of the report is to review the activities of the IFI during that period. This review comprises a description of the IFI and its activities, its sources of finance, past assessments of its activities, publicity and complementarity with other EC programmes. In addition, this report also looks forward to the new five year strategy of the IFI to its anticipated winding-up in 2010, the twenty-fifth anniversary of its creation, and outlines a proposal for EU involvement during this final phase of the IFI's work.

Context: since the 1960's, political divisions and inter-community violence have dominated Northern Ireland, impacting also on the Republic of Ireland. In 1985, 13 years before the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (April 1998), the Anglo-Irish Treaty provided for the two Governments to "co-operate to promote the economic and social development of those areas of both parts of Ireland which have suffered most severely from the consequences of the instability of recent years" and "to consider the possibility of securing international support for this work".

This gave birth in 1986 to the International Fund for Ireland, an independent international organisation with its own governing body.

The European Community has been contributing to the IFI since 1989. At the end of 2006, European Union support will represent about 57% of the annual contribution to the Fund and 39% of cumulative contributions to that date.

Outline of the financial activities of the IFI: this report and its annexes build on the 2004 Report on the International Fund for Ireland, and fulfil the requirements for the assessment mentioned above. The IFI's **principal objectives** areto promote economic and social advance and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout Ireland. Approximately 75 % of the IFI's resources shall be distributed in Northern Ireland.

As regards beneficiaries, the IFI assists basically the same categories of people as the PEACE II Programme. Where projects can be funded by both IFI and EC programmes, the IFI policy is to be the "first money on the table" although it may offer a lower financial contribution. Compared to the EC programmes, the IFI processes applications quickly using streamlined selection procedures, and is more flexible in responding to emerging needs and opportunities as its budget is decided annually

Conclusions and future proposals: all the European Commission reports have unanimously recognised the very positive contribution of the IFI's activities to peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland thereby fulfilling its objectives, namely to promote economic and social advance, and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout Ireland.

The current round of EC Structural Funds Programmes (in particular the PEACE II Programme), which are the major instruments to promote economic and social progress in the region, present new opportunities for the IFI. The priorities set by both IFI and EC Programmes complement each other and this high potential for synergies needs to be further harnessed. The continuation of the PEACE programme and the new strategy for the IFI – Sharing the Space – will enable these synergies to be further realised.

The Commission welcomes the strategy Sharing the Space. It is a realistic strategy which will ensure that progress is made towards a shared future, promoting integration and understanding and ensuring that the work of the IFI is continuing and lasting beyond the end of its life. Given that reinforcing the solidarity between Member States and between their peoples is a core EU objective, it is therefore important for the EU to remain committed to these objectives, alongside other international donors, and to renew its contribution to the IFI.

Funding after 2006: the Commission believes that funding should still be provided on the basis of the observations made in this report, which could be reflected either in the future Council Regulation on the EC contribution to the IFI (CNS/2006/0194), or through other appropriate means of co-operation between the Commission and the IFI.

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

2004/0228(CNS) - 14/12/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by James NICHOLSON (PPE, UK) and approved the Commission's proposal.