



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

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# Update on the PEACE IV Programme

## 1 Introduction

On 19 October 2011 the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMdfM) received a presentation on the EU Structural Funds in which there were indications of the possibility of a further PEACE Programme beyond the current funding period (2007-13)<sup>1</sup>.

The paper provides an update on the status of the development of a future PEACE IV Programme from 2014<sup>2</sup>.

## 2 Peace IV in the Future Structural Funds

Responsibility for policy regarding the Structural Funds is a reserved matter. Responsibility for overseeing the implementation of Structural Funds in Northern Ireland lies with the Department for Finance and Personnel (DFP). Implementation of

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<sup>1</sup> Committee for OFMdfM minutes 19 October 2011: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Committees/Office-of-the-First-Minister-and-deputy-First-Minister/Minutes-of-Proceedings/Wednesday-25-May-20112311/>; see Research and Information Service Briefing Paper 126/11 *The EU Peace and Interreg Programmes in Northern Ireland*, 14 October 2011, p.2: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/RalSe/Publications/2011/OFMdfM/12611.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See Department of Finance and Personnel and Special EU Programmes Body evidence to the Committee for Finance and Personnel 16 January 2013.

the Cross Border Cooperation Programmes PEACE and INTERREG is the responsibility of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), a cross-border body sponsored by DFP and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER).

The UK Government engages with the EU institutions with regard to funding programmes for Northern Ireland. The process for the development of future programmes is as follows:

- Any future PEACE funding would come from European Union **Cohesion Policy** 2014-2020 programmes<sup>3</sup>. The Cohesion Policy is linked to the broader context of the Europe 2020 Strategy<sup>4</sup>.
- The EU Budget for 2014-2020, in the form of the **Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF)**<sup>5</sup>, has provisionally allocated €375bn to the Cohesion Policy. However, the UK Government, in common with some other Member States (Germany, France and the Netherlands), is critical of the budget proposals, preferring a freeze or reduction<sup>6</sup>.
- The MFF is subject to unanimous agreement by the European Council and subsequent approval by the European Parliament. There was no agreement on the MFF at the special Heads of Government summit in November 2012, so agreement will be sought in 2013.
- The future funds require a legislative package to form a framework for agreeing contracts and Operational Programmes with Member States. The draft **Cohesion Policy Regulations** were published in 2011<sup>7</sup>. Discussions on these Regulations between the European Parliament, Council and Commission are under way to establish consensus on an agreed text for legislation when the MFF is agreed<sup>8</sup>.
- A Member State **Partnership Agreement (PA)** has to be submitted within four months of the Regulations coming into force. This sets out arrangements to ensure alignment with the Europe 2020 Strategy. An estimated timetable for this is<sup>9</sup>:
  - February/March 2013 – input from devolved administrations for the UK PA

<sup>3</sup> Future EU Cohesion Policy: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/what/future/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm).

<sup>4</sup> Europe 2020 Strategy: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm).

<sup>5</sup> Multi-Annual Financial Framework 2014-2020: [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/mff/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/mff/index_en.cfm).

<sup>6</sup> DFP paper to the Committee for Finance and Personnel 16 January 2013, p.5; see also House of Commons Library Standard Note SNEP 6455 *EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020* 21 November 2012:

<http://www.parliament.uk/Templates/BriefingPapers/Pages/BPPdfDownload.aspx?bp-id=SN06455>; and the EU Select Committee inquiry into the Financial Framework: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/eu-select-committee/-inquiries/parliament-2010/eu-financial-framework-from-2014/>.

<sup>7</sup> Draft Cohesion Policy Regulations: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/what/future/proposals\\_2014\\_2020\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/proposals_2014_2020_en.cfm).

<sup>8</sup> DFP paper to the Committee for Finance and Personnel 16 January 2013, p.7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.8-10.

- April 2013 – clearance by the European Affairs Committee, including devolved administration agreement
- May/August 2013 – public consultation on the UK PA
- December 2013 – final UK PA text
- The PA includes a list of **Operational Programmes**, which set out the funding priorities for each programme

### 3 The Development of Peace IV

Concerns have been raised that the UK Government position on the EU budget may jeopardise the PEACE IV Programme<sup>10</sup>. However, there is UK commitment to a further PEACE fund in the UK response to the EU Cohesion Report<sup>11</sup>:

*In the case of Northern Ireland, the PEACE III Programme, which is funded from the Territorial Cooperation Objective, is helping to consolidate the region's institutions of devolved governance, and to address the legacy of decades of conflict and division. Given the unique nature of the programme, further assistance would be highly desirable - whether as a fourth stand alone PEACE Programme or cross border programme with an additional social dimension.*

The Programme is also alluded to in the draft Regulation for European Territorial Cooperation<sup>12</sup>:

*In the case of any cross-border programme between Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland in support of peace and reconciliation, the ERDF shall also contribute to promoting social and economic stability in the regions concerned, notably by actions to promote cohesion between communities.*

The Irish Government is also in support of a further PEACE Programme<sup>13</sup>.

According to the DFP<sup>14</sup>:

*Proposals at the November 2012 European Council—although not agreed—included €150 million EU funds for PEACE IV. The UK expects this proposal to remain on the*

<sup>10</sup> 'MEP says UK Government putting Peace IV money at risk', BBC News 9 November 2012: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-20441459>.

<sup>11</sup> UK Government response to the European Commission's Consultation on the Conclusions of the Fifth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion: February 2011: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/consultation/5cr/pdf/answers/national/uk\\_government\\_contribution\\_2011\\_02\\_08.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/consultation/5cr/pdf/answers/national/uk_government_contribution_2011_02_08.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal, COM(2011) 611, 14 March 2012 (revised October 2011), p.9: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2014/proposals/regulation/etc/etc\\_proposal\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2014/proposals/regulation/etc/etc_proposal_en.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Dáil debate 22 November 2012, Official Report Vol.784 No.3 p.605: [http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/WebAttachments.nsf/\(\\$vLookupByConstructedKey\)/dail-20121128/\\$File/Daily%20Book%20Unrevised.pdf?openelement](http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/WebAttachments.nsf/($vLookupByConstructedKey)/dail-20121128/$File/Daily%20Book%20Unrevised.pdf?openelement).

<sup>14</sup> DFP paper to the Committee for Finance and Personnel 16 January 2013, p.16.

*table. The UK would be prepared to consider top-slicing its overall allocation for Territorial Cooperation in order to secure the additional €50 million EU funds likely to be required to ensure the viability of a PEACE IV Programme. We are not yet sure if this will displace Northern Ireland funding on other programmes, such as our future INTERREG IVA Cross Border Programme.*

Planning for a PEACE IV Programme is running in parallel with the negotiation processes regarding the EU budget and future funding programmes, outlined above. The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) carried out a public consultation on potential priorities and content of the Programme 28 August to 20 November 2012<sup>15</sup>. Following consideration of consultation responses<sup>16</sup>, an Operational Programme for PEACE IV will be drawn up and a public consultation on this held early-mid 2013<sup>17</sup>.

167 responses – on both PEACE IV and INTERREG V - were received to the consultation on the future Structural Funds and 1000 people attended consultation events. One of the key themes emerging from the responses is that of issues for young people in disadvantaged areas, including formal and informal educational attainment. In terms of delivery mechanisms, the local authority clusters under PEACE III are likely to be retained<sup>18</sup>.

### **Evaluation of PEACE III**

The PEACE Programme in general has been regarded as having a positive impact on the transition from conflict in Northern Ireland<sup>19</sup>, seen in the context of peacebuilding efforts in the past, encouraging socio-economic reform through changes in attitudes, values and behaviours of citizens, and, more explicitly in PEACE III, foster reconciliation<sup>20</sup>.

Formal evaluations of PEACE III have been carried out at priority level in 2010, there will be individual project evaluations and a programme-wide evaluation will be carried out at the conclusion of the Programme. Two evaluations were published in 2010 that addressed two themes of the Programme:

Priority 1.1 - Building positive relations at the local level

Priority 1.2 – Acknowledging and dealing with the past

The evaluation into Priority 1.1 came to the general conclusions<sup>21</sup>:

<sup>15</sup> SEUPB European Territorial Co-operation 2014-2020 Consultation: <http://www.seupb.eu/2014-2020Consultation/overview.aspx>.

<sup>16</sup> Consultation responses are published on the SEUPB website: <http://www.seupb.eu/2014-2020Consultation/feedback.aspx>.

<sup>17</sup> DFP paper to the Committee for Finance and Personnel 16 January 2013, p.19.

<sup>18</sup> SEUPB presentation to the Committee for Finance and Personnel 16 January 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Sean Byrne (2011), *Economic Assistance and Conflict Transformation: Peacebuilding in Northern Ireland*, London: Routledge, pp.95-97.

<sup>20</sup> Audra Mitchell (2010), 'Putting the Peaces Back Together: The 'Long' Liberalising Peace in Northern Ireland', from O'Neill to PEACE' in *Irish Political Studies* 25(3), p.386.

<sup>21</sup> ASM Horwath (2010), *Review of the Implementation of PEACE III Theme 1.1: Building Positive Relations at the Local Level*, Belfast: SEUPB, p.63:

*The Programme to date has made a significant degree of progress through:*

- a) embedding innovative approaches to Peace and Reconciliation;*
- b) utilising the Aid for Peace approach;*
- c) developing new working relationships between local authorities, the voluntary, community and statutory sectors; and*
- d) enabling Cross Border working.*

However, there are also the following limitations:

- a) the sheer number and diversity of outputs, compounded by the fact that none of them are SMART; and*
- b) that the Programme is still at a relatively early stage.*

Overall, the evaluation concluded:

*Although it is difficult to estimate the impact to date, it is likely that the interventions presently being undertaken reflect the strategic ambition of the Theme 1.1 and if effectively delivered will have the anticipated impact as outlined in each Action Plan.*

The evaluation of Priority 1.2 indicated the following key messages<sup>22</sup>:

*There is potential within the landscape of activities funded under Strand 2 to address a wide spectrum of Victims and Survivors needs, that at one end of the spectrum represent comparatively minor needs (such as anger and anxiety) through to entrenched, complex, multi-stranded psychological issues arising from trauma.*

*Whilst there are often quality standards in place, practice is varied and inconsistent. Standards are driven by the project organisation rather than as a result of Peace III funding requirements.*

*Theme 1.2 is anticipated to produce outcomes against all four 'Aid for Peace' indicators. Some of these indicators are more readily understood (e.g. attitudinal change, behavioural change). How 'acknowledging the past' contributes to peace and reconciliation processes is more complex. Application of the 'Aid for Peace' indicators is helping projects to think through how their activity links to wider peace and reconciliation processes and objectives.*

*The clearest gap relates to activities envisaged under Strand 1. Other potential gaps relate to provision of services in Southern Border Counties, efforts to mainstream service delivery (or at least enhance collaboration with public agencies), PUL*

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[http://www.seupb.eu/Libraries/PEACE\\_III\\_Reports\\_Pubs/Review\\_of\\_the\\_Implementation\\_of\\_PEACE\\_III\\_Theme\\_1\\_1\\_Report\\_-\\_Building\\_Positive\\_Relations\\_at\\_the\\_Local\\_Level.sflb.ashx](http://www.seupb.eu/Libraries/PEACE_III_Reports_Pubs/Review_of_the_Implementation_of_PEACE_III_Theme_1_1_Report_-_Building_Positive_Relations_at_the_Local_Level.sflb.ashx).

<sup>22</sup> Deloitte (2010), *Theme 1.2: Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past – Review of Implementation*, Belfast: SEUPB, p.6: [http://www.seupb.eu/Libraries/PEACE\\_III\\_Reports\\_Pubs/Theme\\_1\\_2\\_Acknowledging\\_and\\_Dealing\\_with\\_the\\_Past\\_-\\_Review\\_of\\_Implementation.sflb.ashx](http://www.seupb.eu/Libraries/PEACE_III_Reports_Pubs/Theme_1_2_Acknowledging_and_Dealing_with_the_Past_-_Review_of_Implementation.sflb.ashx).

*communities and other legacies of the past (e.g. peace walls and other physical and non-physical barriers across the region) that are not being dealt with in the context of connecting the past with the future.*

A mid-term evaluation of PEACE III is to be published in early 2013.

Appendix: Approximate Timescale of Processes towards PEACE IV<sup>23</sup>

2013	EU Processes		UK Processes	PEACE IV
January	Negotiations on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework	Discussions on the Cohesion Policy Regulations		SEUPB response to the consultation <sup>24</sup>
February	Agreement on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework		Devolved administration input to the UK Partnership Agreement	Drafting of the Operational Programme
March	Intended start of the legislative phase for the Multi-Annual Financial Framework <sup>25</sup>			
April			Agreement on the UK Partnership Agreement in the European Affairs Committee and with devolved administrations	
May	Regulations signed off <sup>26</sup>		Public consultation on the Partnership Agreement	
June				
July				Consultation on the draft Operation Programme
August				
September				Consideration of the draft Operational programme by the European Commission
October				
November				

<sup>23</sup> Primarily derived from the DFP paper to the Committee for Finance and Personnel 16 January 2013, except where indicated..

<sup>24</sup> SEUPB consultation web pages: <http://www.seupb.eu/2014-2020Consultation/feedback.aspx>.

<sup>25</sup> Council of the European Union MFF negotiation web pages: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/special-reports/mff?lang=en>.

<sup>26</sup> SEUPB presentation to the Committee for Finance and Personnel 16 January 2013.

December	End of the current Multi-Annual Financial Framework <sup>27</sup>	Final UK Partnership Agreement text	Operational Programme in place
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<sup>27</sup> Multi-Annual Financial Framework web pages: [http://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/multiannual-financial-framework-2014-2020/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/multiannual-financial-framework-2014-2020/index_en.htm).