

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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The Hume Resolution and Possible Special European Community Measures for Northern Ireland

1. In 1979 John Hume MEP together with two other members of the European Parliament tabled a motion for a resolution calling on the European Commission to

- (i) present a report on the impact of Community Membership on Northern Ireland;
- (ii) to review the outlook for the economy of Northern Ireland and to assess the policies and resources needed to bring the region up to the Community average as regards living standards and employment;
- (iii) to put forward proposals as to how the necessary resources should be made available.

The Hume resolution received widespread support including the support of Irish MEPs and the two other Northern Ireland MEPs Messrs. Taylor and Paisley. The British Government also took the somewhat unusual step of circularising all 81 British Members of the Parliament advising them of the British Governments support for the move. The resolution was unanimously endorsed by the European Parliament on 19 June 1980 and referred to the Commission for the drafting of active proposals to be approved by the Council of Ministers. The Commission (Commissioner Giolitti) following the adoption of the resolution instructed a Task Force within the Commission to investigate the matter.

2. The Task Force (Jaeger Group) was requested to do "an analysis of the possible options concerning further Community measures in Northern Ireland. This study was mainly to concern better coordination and intensification of the measures of existing instruments but not to exclude the possibility of new measures". It was clear from the outset that new measures were not to be

regarded as central to the Task Forces' deliberations. In this regard there was some disappointment at what was seen as the limited mandate given to the Task Force. There was also a reluctance on the part of the Task Force to have the Community assume responsibility for assistance, the need for which would be obviated by improvements in the political situation e.g. energy costs could be reduced by restoration of the North/South electricity interconnector. There was also a reluctance to use Community finance to reduce the burden on the British Exchequer.

3. The Task Force reported in June 1981. It concluded that intensifying Community measures was not a viable option in the following areas:- job creation, energy, training of labour, agriculture. In the area of housing however the report indentified a need which the Community could fill to some extent provided the money made available was really used as additional to national expenditure. It was in its examination of the possibilities for the construction and modernisation of housing in Northern Ireland that the Task Force was particularly forthcoming.
4. On 23 September, 1981 the Commission decided in principle to devote 30 million ECU's to finance an "integrated operation" in Northern Ireland, the bulk of which (28m ECU's) would be for housing and a small amount of which (2m ECU's) would be spent on studies for economic development in Northern Ireland. The proposal was envisaged as part of a multiannual programme, and was regarded as the first stage of the Commissions response to the Hume resolution. The Commission has also set up an informal group (Durieux Group) which will keep under review measures envisaged for the benefit of Northern Ireland and which will propose new initiatives as necessary.
5. On 26 November 1981 the Commission sent to the Council a proposal for a "Council Regulation instituting a specific action on behalf of housing in Northern Ireland within the framework of an integrated operation in Belfast". The proposal is

currently under examination by the Permanent Representatives Committee and it is expected that it will shortly be referred again to the Council for consideration. The proposal will be examined by the Council under its new title "Council Regulation instituting a specific action on behalf of housing in Northern Ireland (Belfast)". The deletion of the reference to integrated operations being necessary to take account of technical objections from some delegations and to enable existing financial resources to be used. All member states accept that there is an exceptional situation in Belfast and a need to demonstrate Community solidarity in solving the problem. Throughout the examination of the Commissions proposal Ireland has supported the Commission.

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