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PS/Mr Ingram (DED, B&L)*
PS/Mr Worthington (DHSS, DENI&L)*
PS/Lord Dubs (DANI, DOE&L)*
PS/PUS (L&B)*
PS/Sir David Fell*
NI Permanent Secretaries*
Mr Semple
Mr Quinn
Mr Wood
Mr Layberry
Mr Crawford

* Without enclosures

From: Linda Wilson
European Division

Date: 26 August 1997

PS/Mr Murphy (DFP, B&L)

**EU SPECIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION -
VISIT OF MEPs FROM 28-29 AUGUST**

1. The Minister of State has invited 4 MEPs from the European Parliament's Budget Committee to visit Northern Ireland from 28-29 August. The MEPs involved are Detlev Samland (Chairman of the Budget Committee); Stanislaw Tillich (the Rapporteur); and Terry Wynn and John Tomlinson (Members of the Budget Committee). The purpose of the visit is to show the MEPs some of the work of the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (the Peace Programme) at first hand and to lobby them with regard to the second tranche of funding for the Programme.

Background

2. The funding for the final 2 years of the Peace Programme will be decided in the Autumn. It was agreed in July that 100 mecu for 1998 should be included for the Programme in the draft budget and that the money should be found by a levy on other Community Initiatives. The next stage of the process involves the Budget Committee of the

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European Parliament which will consider the draft budget during September and the first half of October. The budget will then be referred to a plenary session of the Parliament during October before returning to the Council for a second reading in November. A further meeting between the Council and the Parliament may be required before final ratification of the budget by the Council in December.

3. This visit, which involves key members of the Budget Committee, gives us an important opportunity to press our case for further funding for the Programme. It will also give the MEPs a chance to meet some of the people involved in the implementation of the Programme and to visit a few projects to see the work of the Programme at first hand. A draft Programme for the visit is attached at Annex A.

Dinner on Thursday 28 August

4. The Minister has agreed to host a dinner for the MEPs at Hillsborough Castle on Thursday 28 August at 7.30 pm for 8.00 pm. It is proposed that there will be a brief photocall to mark the occasion. A guest list for the dinner is attached at Annex B and relevant briefing for the dinner (in the form of lines to take) is attached at Annex C.

Project Visit on Friday 29 August

5. It is proposed that the Minister should also accompany the visiting MEPs on their first project visits in Belfast on Friday 29 August. As time is limited, the 3 Northern Ireland MEPs have also been invited to participate in these visits although only Mr Nicholson and Dr Paisley will be able to attend. Before the first visit begins, the Minister will have a short meeting (in a private room) with all the MEPs from 9.15 am to 9.35 am. The Minister will find the briefing provided for the previous night's dinner useful for this meeting. Officials will also be in attendance throughout the visits.
6. After the meeting the Minister and all the MEPs will have an opportunity to visit 2 separate projects. Background details about these are attached at Annex D. The visits will last from 9.35 am to 10.35 am after which the 4 visiting MEPs will proceed to Portadown. Mr Nicholson has indicated that he wishes to welcome the MEPs to his constituency and arrangements have been made accordingly.
7. A draft press release which welcomes the visit (and which has been cleared with the Press Office) is attached at Annex E for the Minister's consideration.

Jade Hill

L S WILSON

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ANNEX A

VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND OF MEPS 28 AUGUST TO 29 AUGUST 1997
DRAFT OUTLINE PROGRAMME.

Thursday 28 August 1997

Late afternoon/
early evening Arrive at Airport and transfer to Stormont Hotel

19.00 for
20.00 Dinner hosted by Mr Murphy in Hillsborough Castle

22.30 Depart for hotel

Friday 29 August 1997

8.15 Meeting with European Commission representative(s) in hotel
(approx. 20 mins)

8.40 Depart hotel for visit to projects in Belfast
(to include meeting with NI MEPs)

9.15 Meeting with MEPs: Community Development Centre,
22 Cliftonville Road, Belfast. BT14

9.35 Visit to Projects: Torr Heath Community Centre,
5 Heathfield Court, Belfast. BT14 6PY
and Manor Street Community Facility,
Cliftonville, Belfast. BT14 6DX

Note: Both projects and the Community Development Centre are in
close proximity

10.35 Depart for Portadown

11.15 Presentation by IFBs and Visit to Project: Community Network
3 Market Lane,
Portadown BT62 3JY

12.30 Depart for lunch with Armagh District Partnership and NIPB
representatives

13.00 Lunch - Council Offices, The Palace Demesne. Armagh

14.15 - Depart for airport - Mr Tillich & Mr Samland
- Depart for visit to Project - Mr Wynn & Mr Tomlinson

15.15 Visit to project - Ulster People's College
30 Adelaide St, Belfast. BT9 6FY

16.15 Depart for airport

Minister to join

*Check
30 Adelaide Park*

ANNEX B

GUEST LIST FOR DINNER AT HILLSBOROUGH CASTLE

Mr Paul Murphy MP

Mr Detlev Samland MEP - Chairman of the European Parliament Budget Committee

Mr Stanislaw Tillich MEP - Rapporteur of the European Parliament Budget Committee

Mr Terry Wynn MEP)

Mr John Tomlinson MEP) Members of the European Parliament Budget Committee

Mr John Semple

Mr Stephen Quinn

Mr Jack Layberry

Mr Liam Barr

Ms Ann-Marie Lawlor (UKREP)

ANNEX C

EU SPECIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Introductory Remarks	Appendix 1
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VISIT TO PROJECTS

The visit will cover both sides of the peace lines in North Belfast and will involve the predominantly Protestant Torrens neighbourhood and the mainly Catholic area of Cliftonville. Both areas have benefited greatly in recent years from a concerted programme of community development and capacity building. In both project cases, the Belfast European Partnership Board is co-ordinating closely with Making Belfast Work (MBW) (which is also responsible for managing funding through the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation) in order to ensure that larger scale projects come to fruition.

1. Torr Health Community Centre

The area of Torrens in North Belfast is a small Protestant enclave of some 272 houses. The area is part of the Cliftonville ward which has been recognised by statutory agencies as a deprived area. In addition to high levels of poverty within the locality, Torrens has suffered greatly during the years of conflict and remains one of the city's most volatile flash-points, particularly during the Summer months.

The proposal submitted to the Belfast European Partnership is for capital costs of £194,583 (approximately 70% of capital costs) for a new-build community centre for the area. The present portacabin facility, erected 20 years ago with a projected life-span of 10 years is now in a very poor state of repair. In spite of this, the Management Committee (all of whom are local residents) have of late developed and maintained a vibrant programme of activity and have recently constructed a purpose-built play area adjoining the Centre.

The proposed new facility will allow for the consolidation and development of recent gains in the Torrens area and will be an important boost to community morale.

Belfast European Partnership has granted full costs to the Management Committee and is

awaiting the outcome of an economic appraisal commissioned by MBW. In addition, a small sum has been granted to the group to undertake community centre management training in advance of the new facility.

2. Manor Street/Cliftonville Youth and Community Centre

The Manor Street/Cliftonville is an area of North Belfast that has shifted in recent years to become predominately Catholic. Again, recognised by statutory agencies as a deprived middle-city ward, this area which adjoins the Protestant Lower Oldpark is a neighbourhood where inter-communal tensions in North Belfast are played out during the Summer months. Relative to other parts of the city, Manor Street/Cliftonville would be perceived as benefiting from a well-developed community infrastructure with a number of issue-focused groups working together in a co-ordinated fashion.

The proposal submitted to Belfast European Partnership is for 70% of capital costs, £224,330, towards a youth and community facility. The Manor Street/Cliftonville Community Group has been working towards this goal in a concerted and strategic way over a period of years with the aim of replacing the old Manor Street Youth Club facility which was destroyed by fire in 1987.

A new build centre would build on the good work which has been done in the area and provide a base for further development in the future for all of the 12 groups who are represented on the Committee. Belfast European Partnership has ring-fenced the amount requested pending the outcome of an independent economic appraisal. In the interim period, a portacabin facility has been provided on-site by MBW in order that activities may commence.

28 August 1997

MEPs SEE WHAT EUROPEAN PEACE MONEY IS DOING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Mr Paul Murphy MP, Minister of State with special responsibility for European affairs in Northern Ireland, had to be at his persuasive best today.

He was conducting four MEPs from the European Parliament's Budget Committee on a tour of some of the Northern Ireland projects funded through the European Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

His objective: to let the MEPs see what was being achieved in the province by the European peace money and to encourage their support for a continuation of the funding to Northern Ireland.

The Minister and the MEPs visited two projects in North Belfast - the Torr Heath and the Manor Stree/Cliftonville Youth and Community Centres. During the visit they had an opportunity to meet with people from both communities and to hear about the contribution which the projects are making to fostering peace and reconciliation.

Mr Murphy said: "The EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation is a key programme for Northern Ireland. I am pleased to let the MEPs see at first hand some of the good work being carried out

through the programme."

The MEPs involved in the visit are Mr Detlev Samland, Chairman of the Budget Committee; Stanislaw Tillich, the Rapporteur; and Terry Wynn and John Tomlinson, both members of the Budget Committee.

During their visit they will meet many of the key people involved in the programme, including representatives from the Intermediary Funding Bodies and the District Partnerships as well as Government officials.

Mr Murphy said: "The programme has attracted a great deal of interest on the ground throughout Northern Ireland. It is an important programme and I am keen to ensure that we obtain a significant tranche of new funding for the years 1998 to 1999 so that we can build on the achievements to date."

Indicating that the Budget Committee was expected to reach a decision in the autumn about the second round of funding for the programme for Northern Ireland and the border counties, Mr Murphy said: "It is vital that funding is found to enable the continuation of the programme for a further two years. This will enable the work which has been started under the first round of funding to be consolidated and proper exit strategies to be put in place. Although much has been achieved under the programme already, much remains to be done and I hope the European Union will be able to continue its support for the programme for a further two years."

Notes for Editors:

When the Peace Programme was agreed in July 1995, funding of 300 mecu (approximately £215m) was decided only for the first three years of the five-year programme. Discussion regarding the second tranche of funding are now under way. The European Commission has proposed the inclusion of 100 mecu (£70m approximately) in the draft budget for 1998 and it is understood that a similar amount will be proposed for 1999.

The European Parliament's Budget Committee will consider the budget in early autumn after which it will be referred to Parliament. Final ratification of the budget is not expected until December.

There is some doubt as to where the additional money for the Peace and Reconciliation Programme is to be found. It is currently proposed that it will be found by a levy on other Community initiatives. This is likely to prove controversial and the visit of the four MEPs at this time is particularly useful as it will enable them to brief other members of the Budget Committee more fully on the programme.

The programme contains the following sub-programmes - Employment, Urban and Rural REgeneration, Cross-Border Development, Social Inclusion, Productive Investment, Partnerships and Technical Assistance.

An information pack, which gives details about the programme, the relevant contact for each measure and an application form is available from:-

Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation

European Division

Department of Finance and Personnel

The Arches Centre

11-13 Bloomfield Avenue

BELFAST

BT5 5HD

Tel: 01232 526938

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APPENDIX 1

Introductory Remarks

- Welcome the 4 visiting MEPs and their interest in the Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. Very pleased that they could all spare the time to visit Northern Ireland and that we have the opportunity to show them the good work being carried out under the Programme.
- Know that the 3 Northern Ireland MEPs have also been heavily involved in the Programme and are very supportive of it.
- In the short time available, it will only be possible to visit a very few projects. Would emphasise that there will be large parts of a very wide-ranging Programme which it will not be possible to cover in such a short time and would ask you to bear this in mind.
- There will be an opportunity to meet a District Partnership (Armagh) and meet some members of the Northern Ireland Partnership Board. Also I understand that the Intermediary Funding Bodies have organised a short presentation which will give you a flavour of the work which they have been undertaking.
- Would emphasise the importance which we attach to all the different elements of the Programme. The Programme is unique in that it involves Government Departments, Intermediary Funding Bodies as well as other independent funding bodies and District Partnerships. All of these bodies have a distinctive contribution to make to the work of the Programme.

Continuation of Funding for Programme

- Particularly welcome the European Parliament's support for the Programme to which we attach a high priority. We would very much hope that European funding will be continued at the level proposed for the remaining 2 years. I know that the Irish Government attaches a similar priority to the continuation of funding to this joint Programme.
- Welcome the inclusion of 100 mecu additional funding for 1998 in the recently published draft budget and the indication that there will be a similar amount proposed for 1999. Would seek the support of the MEPs and their contacts in the Budget Committee and the Parliament in securing this funding as quickly as possible. Fully appreciate the Parliament's difficulties and the need for budgetary rigour but would regard it as essential that a significant tranche of **new** funding is found for the Programme.
- A continuation of funding under the Programme will enable a suitable exit strategy to be developed and put in place. There would be great disappointment on the ground throughout Northern Ireland if the Programme could not be continued.
- A significant reduction in funding would be regarded as a lack of commitment by Europe to the political process.

If raised

- Important that this is **new** money; we would resist strongly any suggestion that the Peace Programme should be part-funded from within our existing Structural Funds allocation. This money was allocated to other Programmes and is needed to assist activities under those Programmes.

Achievements of the Programme

- Although expenditure under the Programme was slower than had originally been anticipated because of the complexities involved in establishing the innovative implementation mechanisms involved in the Programme, I am pleased to say that the Programme is now well on the way to full commitment.
- Over 7000 projects were formally approved to end June 1997 to a total value of £170m. (Programme is worth £230m approx in total.) Around a further £20m has been allocated to projects which have been approved 'in principle' and which are expected to be formally approved in the very near future.
- Much good work has been started under the Programme which has also attracted a high level of applications from marginalised groups with no previous experience of European Programmes.
- In addition, the District Partnerships Sub-programme has played an important part in bringing together individuals from all sectors of the community.

Key Points for the Second Tranche

- Accountability and value for money must remain key considerations in the handling of the second tranche.
- Sensible to take account of the recent mid-term evaluation report from Coopers and Lybrand which concluded that while the **process** aspects of the Programme were successful, it is too early to assess the impact of the **value for money** of the Programme.

If Raised

- A large number of small and stand-alone projects have been funded under the first round. Funders in the second tranche might take a more strategic and focused view of what the Programme is trying to achieve.
- We would support the continuation of the broad priorities currently funded under the Programme but would like to see the Programme developed to deliver more high quality, value-for-money projects.
- Revised Programme should take a greater emphasis on issues of **sustainability and the development of appropriate exit strategies**. Important that we do not create a demand which cannot be met in 1999 when the Programme will come to an end. This would be unfair to the participants and to those who might rely on the Programme.

APPENDIX 5

Additionality (If Raised)

- All funding under the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, including matching funding, is entirely additional to Government spending in the Province.
- The previous PM made this absolutely clear when he spoke in Belfast in October 1994; this commitment has been honoured.