

en-aa.

FROM: ROBIN SHAW
EUROPEAN DIVISION, DFP

DATE: 5 MAY 2000

TO: MR EDWIN GALLAGHER, DARD
MR DON HARLEY, DSD
MRS PAULINE KEEGAN, NIPB
MRS PAULINE MURRAY, DRD
MR DAVID BRITTAIN, DE
MR GERRY ROGAN, DHFETE
MR AMBROSE OWENS, DHSSPS
MR HOWARD KEERY, DETI
MRS JULIE MAPSTONE, OFMDFM
MR TONY CANAVAN, OFMDFM
MR COLIN WATSON, DCAL
MR MARK McGUICKIN, NIO

Issued by fax
SJS
(reports are currently held
in bottom drawer of
FF2 - box 6)

EU STRUCTURAL FUNDS 2000-2006: CONSULTATION RESPONSES

1. I attach, for your information, a note of a meeting which was held in Brussels between victims groups (the FAIR Group) and UKRep. The note from Mr Chris Capella is self-explanatory, the contents of which should be noted as part of the ongoing consultation process.
2. The reports/prospectuses mentioned by Mr Capella in paragraph 6 have not been reproduced due to the sheer volume. They are entitled as follows:-
 - (i) Human Rights Abuses in West Tyrone
 - (ii) The True Story of South Armagh
 - (iii) West Tyrone Voice
 - (iv) Families Acting for Innocent Relatives - A Needs Analysis
 - (v) Funding and its Impact on Protestant Communities in Northern Ireland
3. If anyone would wish to have a copy of any of these please let me know.
4. We have also received several papers from Dr Arthur Williamson, Centre for Voluntary Action Studies, University of Ulster, Coleraine. These are entitled:-
 - (i) Voluntary Action and European Union Social Partnership in Ireland, North and South.

- copied to
NIPB 515

(ii) Fledgling Social Partnership in the Irish Border Region: European Union 'Community Initiatives' and the Voluntary Sector.

(iii) Rebuilding Civil Society in Northern Ireland: the community and voluntary sector's contribution to the European Union's Peace and Reconciliation District Partnership Programme. - copied to NIPB 5/5

5. Again, because of the volume these papers have not been reproduced but copies are available from me upon request.

Robin Shaw

ROBIN SHAW

☎ 23933



5 April 2000

Jack Layberry
DFP NI

United Kingdom
Permanent Representation
To the European Union

By fax

Avenue d'Auderghem 10
1040 Brussels
Telephone: (0032)(2) 287 8211
Telex: 24312
Facsimile: (0032)(2) 287 8397
Direct Line: (0032)(2) 287 8266

Dear Mr Layberry

VICTIMS GROUPS (THE FAIR GROUP) AND THE STRUCTURAL FUNDS

1. I saw a group of about 15 representatives of victims groups yesterday at Jim Nicholson's request. I thought I should report the degree of resentment and frustration they feel (rightly or wrongly) about accessing the structural funds. They also saw some other MEPs (including Dana).

2. Their grievances boil down to the following:

- they feel disadvantaged by comparison with community / ex-detainees groups which appear to know how to exploit the system (e.g. access to PEACE funds) better than they do;
- they admitted that part of the problem was their lack of expertise in the structural funds process, but they found it difficult to access advice and felt they had been cold shouldered by Partnership Boards, which, they claimed, were in thrall to community / ex-detainees groups;
- they also felt disadvantaged by comparison with WAVE (?) which they described as a victims' organisation with official backing;
- they believed that PEACE had focussed on urban areas at the expense of the rural areas they come from (South Armagh, East Tyrone);
- they cited as an example of lack of even handedness, the rejection of their application of funding for staffing their umbrella organisation while those of community / ex-detainees groups' were granted;
- they did not appreciate being associated with ex-detainees / paramilitary groups at meetings etc - this was insensitive.

3. My message to them was:

- when it came to accessing existing PEACE funding, to fashion bids which met the eligibility criteria for funding (some of them had only a hazy idea) and were demonstrably well managed. If, having done that, they felt that the Partnership Boards were not giving them a fair crack, they should approach the Department.



- When it came to the new programme, to discuss with those responsible for its design how priorities and management could be improved to enable good projects from victims groups to be funded more easily.
 - I was not in a position to judge the strength of their case: priorities and process needed to be determined in Northern Ireland, within the rules.
4. You may be approached by them directly, but I suspect they may act through their local political representatives.
5. They appeared to me to be a group of essentially decent and highly motivated people, resentful of the success of other groups at accessing PEACE funding, and incapable at present of competing on equal terms. There may be a sectarian dimension as well, but the resentment seemed to me to have more to do with hostility towards Partnership Boards. The key players were William Fraser and Gareth Porter. Giving them a hearing may be the prudent response and informing them what the structural funds can (and cannot) support.
6. (I am faxing this letter to you and sending a hard copy by bag along with a number of reports / prospectuses handed to me.)

Yours sincerely,

G. Brown

pp. Chris Capella

cc Andrew McCormick, DFP NI