

PRESS RELEASE



Issue Date: January 7 2009

50 million euro of EU Funds available to local and county councils in Northern Ireland and the Border Region

The Special EU Programmes Body today launched a series of public meetings to introduce the European Union Peace and Reconciliation Programme 2007-2013 PEACE III. The meetings will be held across Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland throughout January and February. The venues and times are being advertised in the press and are available on the SEUPB web site www.seupb.eu.

Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland will benefit from a new seven-year €333 million PEACE programme made up of €225 million in additional funding from the European Union along with national contributions of €108 million. 50 million euro has been earmarked for the Peace and Reconciliation Actions Plans of local authority led Peace Partnerships in Northern Ireland and in the border region of Ireland.

The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland, the PEACE III Programme is a distinctive European Union Structural Funds Programme aimed at reinforcing progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promoting reconciliation. It will assist Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland and specifically focus on reconciling communities and contributing towards a shared society.

The programme will carry forward key aspects of the previous PEACE Programmes (PEACE I and II) and will have a continued and renewed emphasis on reconciliation. The PEACE III Programme will continue the earlier programme's cross-border focus on Ireland, North and South.

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is the Managing Authority for the new programme. Within the SEUPB, the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) will be the main implementation mechanism for the PEACE III Programme. The centralisation of this function within the SEUPB will ensure a standardised approach to process, interpretation of regulations; and financial control.

Part of the PEACE Programme will be implemented by the Consortium of Border Action and the Community Relations Council (CRC). The functions of this Intermediate Body will be similar to that of the JTS and it will look after the implementation of projects relating to acknowledging and dealing with the past. The Consortium will be the only Intermediate Body for the new programmes. This represents a significant change from the way in which the programmes have been run in the past when a large number of Intermediary Funding Bodies were involved.

In order to achieve maximum impact from the funding available a new strategic approach has been adopted for the PEACE III Programme. This means that community and voluntary groups can access PEACE III Programme funding in a new way.

Local Councils in Northern Ireland have formed themselves into eight clusters and will play a much more strategic part in the delivery of PEACE III. The six County Councils in the Border Region of Ireland have the same role. Working in partnership with communities, they have developed local Peace and Reconciliation Action Plans. There remains a strong emphasis on the “bottom up” approach and projects are encouraged to form partnerships to address shared issues and concerns. Community and voluntary groups are encouraged to contact their local authority for information on their Cluster’s Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan which may contain a small grants programme and opportunities to tender for the delivery of projects.

Community and voluntary groups which are considering developing projects relating to acknowledging and dealing with the past should contact the Consortium, of Border Action and the Community Relations Council (CRC), which has been appointed to deliver this priority.

Ends

For further media enquiries please contact Maria McCann at McCann Public Relations on +44(0)2890 666322

Notes to editors:

The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Finance in Ireland. The Body was established on 2 December 1999 under the Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and

Northern Ireland and the Government of Ireland (8 March 1999) establishing implementing bodies. The Body reports to the North/South Ministerial Council. website www.seubp.eu.

The local councils in Northern Ireland have formed themselves into eight clusters in order to play a much more strategic part in the delivery of PEACE III Programme. An initial allocation of 50 million Euro will fund the Peace and Reconciliation Plan which each cluster has produced. These Peace and Reconciliation Plans will run until 2010 when there will be an opportunity for further plans to be submitted for funding.

The PEACE III Information Roadshows Programme

Wednesday 14 January	1900	Sketrick House, Ards Business Centre, Jubilee Road, Newtownards, BT23 4YH
Thursday 15 January	1230	Craigavon Civic Centre, Lakeview Road, Craigavon, BT64 1AL
Wednesday 21 January	2000	YWCA, North Road, Monaghan
Friday 23 January	1230	Malone House, Barnett Demesne, Belfast BT9 5PB
Monday 26 January	1900	Conference Centre, Belturbet Railway Station, Belturbet
Tuesday 27 January	1930	The Glasshouse, Swan Point, Sligo, County Sligo
Wednesday 28 January	2000	The Mayflower Centre, Drumshanbo
Thursday 29 January	1230	Regional Cultural Centre, Port Road, Letterkenny
Tuesday 3 February	1400	Fir Trees Hotel, Dublin Road, Strabane, BT82 9EA
Wednesday 4 February	1900	Cloonavin, 66 Portstewart Road, Coleraine, BT52 1EY
Friday 6 February	1000	Larne Leisure Centre, Tower Road, Larne, BT40 1AB
Tuesday 10 February	1230	Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre, Burn Road, Cookstown, BT80 8DN
Wednesday 11 February	1800	Mossley Mill, Carnmoney Road North, Newtownabbey, BT36 5QA
Thursday 12 February	1900	Island Civic Centre, Lisburn, BT27 4RL
Tuesday 17 February	1230	The Clinton Centre, Belmore Street, Enniskillen, BT74 6AA
Wednesday 18 February	1800	County Hall, Millennium Centre, Dundalk