COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 2236/2002
of 10 December 2002
concerning Community financial contributions to the International Fund for Ireland (2003-2004)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 308 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament [1],

Whereas:

(1) The International Fund for Ireland (hereinafter 'the Fund') was established in 1986 by the Agreement of 18 September 1986 between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning the International Fund for Ireland (hereinafter 'the Agreement') in order to promote economic and social advance, and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout Ireland, in implementation of one of the objectives specified by the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 15 November 1985.

(2) The sum of ECU 15 million a year has been provided from the Community budget from 1989 until 1995 to support projects of the Fund which have a genuine additional impact in the areas concerned.

(3) Pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 2687/94 of 31 October 1994 on Community financial contributions to the International Fund for Ireland [2], the sum of ECU 20 million was committed from the Community budget for each of the years 1995, 1996 and 1997.

(4) Pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 2614/97 of 15 December 1997 on Community financial contributions to the International Fund for Ireland [3], the sum of ECU 17 million was committed from the Community budget for each of the years 1998 and 1999.

(5) Pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 214/2000 of 24 January 2000 on Community financial contributions to the International Fund for Ireland [4], the sum of EUR 15 million was committed from the Community budget for each of the years 2000, 2001 and 2002.

(6) The assessments carried out in accordance with Article 5 of Regulation (EC) No 214/2000 have confirmed the need for further support for Fund activities, while reinforcing synergy of objectives and coordination with Community Structural Funds interventions, in particular with the Special Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland (hereinafter 'the PEACE Programme').

(7) Regulation (EC) No 214/2000 expires on 31 December 2002.

(8) The peace process in Northern Ireland requires a continuation of Community support to the Fund beyond that date.

(9) At its meeting in Berlin on 24 and 25 March 1999, the European Council decided that the PEACE Programme should be continued for five years, that is to say, from 2000 until 2004, with a total Community contribution of EUR 500 million.

(10) The Community contribution to the Fund should take the form of financial contributions for the years 2003 and 2004, thus terminating at the same time as the PEACE programme.

(11) In allocating the Community contribution, the Fund should give priority to projects of a cross-border or cross-community nature, in such a way as to complement the activities funded by the PEACE programme for the period 2000 to 2004.

(12) In accordance with the Agreement, all financial contributors to the Fund participate as observers at the meetings of the Fund's Board (hereinafter 'the Board').

(13) It is vital to ensure proper coordination between the activities of the Fund and those financed under the Community Structural Funds provided for by Article 159 of the Treaty, in particular the PEACE programme.

[1] Opinion delivered on 20 November 2002 (not yet published in the Official Journal).
[2] OJ L 286, 5.11.1994, p. 5.
[3] OJ L 353, 24.12.1997, p. 5.
[4] OJ L 24, 29.1.2000, p. 7.