

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC SEU 3 (11) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

21 NOVEMBER 2011

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The thirteenth North South Ministerial Council Special EU Programmes meeting was held at the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices Armagh on 21 November 2011. The meeting was attended by Sammy Wilson MP MLA, Minister for Finance and Personnel, Brendan Howlin TD, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and Alex Attwood, Minister of the Environment MLA. Minister Wilson chaired the meeting.

OPENING REMARKS INCLUDING FUTURE EU PROGRAMMES

2. Ministers noted the EU Commission proposals in relation to the new round of Cohesion policy and discussed future EU Programmes in this context.

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES PROGRESS REPORT

3. The Council received a detailed progress report from the Chief Executive of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), Mr Pat Colgan, who reported on the various activities within the Body including progress on

the implementation of the PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes. Ministers noted that at the end of October 2011:

- the PEACE III Programme had approved 149 projects worth €262 million. The total expenditure on the PEACE III Programme was €93.9 million against the target of €82.2 million for the end of 2011 representing a commitment of 78.8% of the overall programme budget;
 - the INTERREG IVA Programme had approved 64 projects worth €181 million. The total expenditure on the INTERREG IVA Programme was €54.9 million against the target of €61.04 million for end of 2011 representing a commitment rate of over 70% of the overall programme budget;
 - local authority-based groups had 19 projects approved worth €24.356 million. SEUPB will continue to work with the groups to develop further projects; and.
 - the SEUPB has put in place a series of actions involving transfers of funds to measures that should be able to utilise the funds faster and the position will be reviewed in January 2012.
4. The Council also noted the work taken forward by the SEUPB to facilitate North South participation in the INTERREG IV transnational and interregional programmes with 55 project partners secured to date across the relevant programmes.
 5. The SEUPB also continues to communicate the positive impacts of the EU programmes with high profile events including participating in the EU Open Days week in Brussels.

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 2012

6. The Council discussed the main priorities for the Special EU Programmes Body in 2012 and reviewed the progress in finalising the Business Plan and Budget 2012.

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

7. The Council noted the Special EU Programmes Body Annual Report and draft Accounts for 2010 which been certified by the Comptrollers and Auditors General and will be laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas shortly.

NEXT MEETING

8. The Council agreed to hold its next Special EU Programmes meeting in April/May 2012.

**Joint Secretariat
21 November 2011**