



NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES MEETING NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

2 APRIL 2025

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twenty-third North South Ministerial Council Special EU Programmes meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices, Armagh on 2 April 2025. The meeting was attended by John O' Dowd MLA, Minister for Finance, Jack Chambers TD, Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform and Paul Givan MLA, Minister for Education. Minister O'Dowd chaired the meeting.

PROGRAMMES 2014-2020

2. The NSMC received a report on the implementation of the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA programmes. Ministers noted that all EU expenditure targets to date for the PEACE IV and the INTERREG VA programmes have been met, and both programmes are currently forecast to achieve full expenditure in line with total programme allocations.
3. Ministers noted that 65 of the 96 PEACE IV projects have completed activity and all closure requirements, with the remaining 31 undergoing the administrative process of closure and are expected to conclude before end of June 2025.
4. The Council noted that 25 of the 32 INTERREG VA projects have completed activity and all closure requirements, with the remaining 7 undergoing the administrative process of closure and are also expected to conclude before end of June this year.

PROGRAMME 2021-2027 (PEACE PLUS)

5. The Council noted the Chief Executive Officer's progress report for the 2021-2027 PEACE PLUS programme. The Council was advised that the PEACE PLUS call timetable is well advanced, and calls have opened under 21 of the programme's 22 Investment Areas and that 81 projects to the value of €758.3 million have so far been approved for PEACEPLUS funding, representing 70.09% of total programme value.

SEUPB BUSINESS PLAN 2025

6. The NSMC noted that the key priorities for the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) for 2025 included closure of the 2014-20 PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes ensuring all targets are achieved to maximise EU receipts, management and implementation of the PEACE PLUS Programme.
7. Ministers noted that ensuring the highest standards of public accountability and financial management are adhered to is a key priority for the SEUPB in order to meet the expectations of SEUPB's many stakeholders and provision of services in relation to applicants, project assessment and support to projects.
8. The Council approved the SEUPB Business Plan for 2025 and recommended the associated budget provision.

ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

9. Ministers noted that the 2022 and the 2023 SEUPB Annual Report and Accounts, having been certified by the Comptrollers and Auditors General in both jurisdictions, have been laid before the Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas.

GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

10. Ministers noted that the governance structures of the Special EU Programmes Body, including the arrangements for oversight by sponsor Departments, oversight of programme implementation, including by the Programme Monitoring Committee, and the audit arrangements continue to operate effectively.
11. The Council noted that the SEUPB is continuing to implement the recommendations of the SEUPB Organisational Review approved by the NSMC on 15 May 2024.

PROJECT PRESENTATION

12. The Council welcomed the presentation made on the PEACE PLUS Peace of Mind Project which is working to enhance emotional resilience in children and young people aged between 9- 25. The project was awarded PEACE PLUS funding of €7,699,611 under Investment Area 3.3 Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing.

OTHER MATTERS – WATERWAYS IRELAND

13. The Council consented to a property disposal.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14. Ministers agreed to hold its next Special EU Programmes meeting in autumn 2025.

JOINT SECRETARIAT

2 APRIL 2025