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**The Rt Hon Chris
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Sir William Cash MP

Chair, European Scrutiny Committee
House of Commons
SW1A 0AA

27 April 2023

Dear Sir William,

THE PEACE PLUS PROGRAMME (NORTHERN IRELAND) REGULATIONS 2023

I wrote to you recently on the Financing Agreement between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ireland and the European Commission on the PEACE PLUS Programme 2021-2027. I am now writing to provide information on the necessary statutory instrument.

As you will recall in my previous letter, the Financing Agreement makes it clear that within the UK, the SEUPB will administer PEACE PLUS in accordance with UK law. The Financing Agreement also obliges the UK and Ireland to implement PEACE PLUS in accordance with a limited number of EU regulations (which apply to all cohesion programmes of this type), but only insofar as relevant and for the duration of the Programme.

A statutory instrument is required, so that the UK, through the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB - the body who manages the fund) and the Department of Finance Northern Ireland, can meet its international obligations under the Financing Agreement.

This statutory instrument will ensure the SEUPB complies with the terms of the Financing Agreement when exercising its functions in relation to PEACE PLUS, including these regulations only insofar as relevant. This is the minimal application of EU law necessary to implement the Programme. The instrument ensures the duration of the SEUPB's requirement to comply is linked to the lifespan of the Programme and the Financing Agreement. The requirements will apply from the point of entry into force of the Agreement until 1 July 2032, being the long-stop date upon which the Agreement will expire if the Programme has not already concluded by then.

This instrument will also confer upon the Department of Finance Northern Ireland the two functions under the Financing Agreement to ensure UK representation in specific aspects of programme implementation: the "national authority" and the UK's representative on the "group of auditors".

I would be happy to organise a briefing on PEACE PLUS if that would be of interest and will provide further information on the programme's implementation.

This is a critical step ahead of the Programme launch and I am delighted we have reached this point. I have no doubt of the significant impact the Programme will bring and look forward to the launch which we expect in the Summer.

I am writing in similar terms to Lord Kinnoull and am copying this letter to the Clerks of both Committees, to the EU Document Scrutiny Manager in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and to the NIO Policy Leads on PEACE PLUS.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris', with a stylized, flowing script.

**THE RT HON CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**