

# European Scrutiny Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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From: Sir William Cash MP

9 June 2021

Rt Hon. Brandon Lewis MP  
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London SW1 2HQ

## PEACE PLUS Programme

**(a) 9555/18: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context (39809)**

**(b) 9536/18: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments (39811)**

We considered your letter of 16 April 2021 concerning the PEACE PLUS Programme at our meeting of 9 June 2021.

We welcome your offer to provide us with a substantive update on the negotiation of a Financing Agreement once a draft of the text has been agreed in principle. We ask that you clarify in your letter the process for conclusion of the Agreement and the impact of any delay on the timing for implementation of the Programme.

We anticipate that one of the issues arising in the negotiation will be dispute resolution, particularly where there are divergent legal and administrative rules on both sides of the border. We recall that, in 2018, the Commission proposed a European Cross-Border Mechanism (ECBM) Regulation allowing for the voluntary application in one Member State of the legal provisions from another Member State, where conflicting national rules constitute a legal obstacle to the delivery of a joint project. The Commission suggested that this could also apply at the EU's external border, so covering cooperation within a region straddling the border between a Member State and a third country. Has this draft Regulation formed any part of the discussions with the Commission or, indeed,

might it provide some inspiration for how cross-border divergence could be managed in order to ensure the effectiveness of PEACE PLUS?

We look forward to your substantive update in due course.

We are copying this letter to Simon Hoare MP, Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee and Stephen Habberley, Clerk of the Committee; the Earl of Kinnoull, Chair of the European Affairs Committee in the House of Lords and Simon Pook, Clerk of the Committee; your Departmental officials; and Les Saunders and Donald Harris in the Cabinet Office.

**CHAIR**