

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair, Finance Committee

12 May 2023

Dear Peredur,

UK/Ireland/EC: Financing Agreement on the PEACE PLUS Programme 2021-2027

As you are aware, the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of non-trade international agreements in the Sixth Senedd.

During our meeting on 24 April 2023, we considered the UK/Ireland/EC: Financing Agreement on the PEACE PLUS Programme 2021-2027. This agreement provides a mechanism for the UK, Ireland and the EU to jointly fund PEACE PLUS, the EU cross-border peace funding programme. This international agreement will govern the implementation of the PEACE PLUS programme and the parties' contributions.

During our consideration of the agreement, we agreed to draw the agreement to the attention of your Committee as it has undertaken an inquiry into post-EU funding arrangements. We also agreed to draw the agreement to the attention of the Culture, Communication, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, and the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee, as those committees are currently undertaking work on post-Brexit EU funding arrangements.

Our latest report is enclosed for your information.

Yours sincerely,

Huw Irranca-Davies

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Chair



International agreements

Agreements considered on 24
April 2023

May 2023



1. Background

1. The Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee is responsible for the scrutiny of non-trade international agreements in the sixth Senedd.
2. International agreements signed by the UK Government can cover matters within devolved competence or matters which have important policy implications for Wales.
3. The Committee will consider the impact on Wales of international agreements laid in the UK Parliament under the process established by the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRaG Act 2010). It provides an initial 21-day scrutiny period.
4. Our consideration of an international agreement takes into account:
 - whether it engages the Senedd's competence; and/or
 - whether there are potential policy implications for Wales.
5. On 24 April 2023¹ we considered two international agreements that had recently been laid in the UK Parliament:
 - UK/Ireland/EC: Financing Agreement on the PEACE PLUS Programme 2021-2027
 - UK-INTERPOL: Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of INTERPOL on the Territory of the UK
6. We agreed to take further action in relation to one of the agreements. Details on each of the agreements and our respective actions are set out below.

¹ Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 24 April 2023

2. Agreement requiring further action

UK/Ireland/EC: Financing Agreement on the PEACE PLUS Programme 2021-2027

- 7.** This international agreement was laid in the UK Parliament on 24 March 2023. Its scrutiny deadline, as required by the CRaG Act 2010, is 18 May 2023.
- 8.** This agreement provides a mechanism for the UK, Ireland and the EU to continue to jointly fund cross-border activities that promote peace and reconciliation and contribute to cross-border economic and territorial development of the Northern Ireland-Ireland border region post-Brexit.
- 9.** Prior to its withdrawal from the EU, the UK committed to continue to fund PEACE PLUS, the EU cross-border peace funding programme, along with Northern Ireland, Ireland and the EU. This international agreement will govern the implementation of the PEACE PLUS programme and the parties' contributions.
- 10.** The agreement relates to international relations which is a reserved matter for the purposes of Schedule 7A to the *Government of Wales Act 2006*. "International relations" includes relations with territories outside the UK and relations with the EU and its institutions.
- 11.** The Explanatory Memorandum to the agreement does not refer to devolution; however, the UK Government notes that the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland was included in the negotiation of the Treaty and that a draft text was shared in advance of signature.²
- 12.** As the Finance Committee, the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language and International Relations Committee, and the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee have all undertaken, or are in the process of undertaking, work on post-Brexit EU funding arrangements, we agreed to draw this agreement to the attention of these Senedd committees.

² UK Government, [Explanatory memorandum: UK/Ireland/EC: Financing Agreement on the Peace Plus Programme 2021-2027](#), March 2023, paragraph 10.1

3. Agreement noted for information

UK-INTERPOL: Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of INTERPOL on the Territory of the UK

13. This international agreement was laid in the UK Parliament on 24 March 2023. Its scrutiny deadline, as required by the CRaG Act 2010, is 18 May 2023.

14. This agreement grants the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), its officers, officials and country representatives certain privileges and immunities covering their activities in the UK. This is a requirement for the UK to host the 2024 INTERPOL General Assembly, however, this agreement is also intended to provide a long-term framework governing the privileges and immunities of INTERPOL in the UK.

15. The agreement relates to international relations which is a reserved matter for the purposes of Schedule 7A to the *Government of Wales Act 2006*. “International relations” includes relations with international organisations such as INTERPOL.

16. The Explanatory Memorandum states that:

“In light of the operational impacts of such privileges and immunities on matters that may be devolved such as justice or policing, the UK Government consulted the Devolved Administrations.”³

17. As justice and policing are not devolved in Wales, this implies that only the Scottish Government was consulted, as the Explanatory Memorandum also states that the Scottish Government will prepare a second and parallel Order in Council to the UK Government’s.⁴

18. As the operational impacts of such privileges and immunities will not impact on devolved areas in the same way in Wales as they will in Scotland, we agreed to note the agreement for information only.

³ UK Government, Explanatory Memorandum: Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of INTERPOL on the Territory of the UK, March 2023, paragraph 10.2

⁴ UK Government, Explanatory Memorandum: Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of INTERPOL on the Territory of the UK, March 2023, paragraph 10.3