

# CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

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Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Tuesday 08 February 2016

EU Funding

**Summary: Mr Murphy asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the total value of EU funding secured through the Special EU Programmes Body since 2007.**

**Mr Storey:** I thank the Member for his question. Since 2007, EU funding totalling £676 million has been secured for the 2007-2013 Peace III and INTERREG Va programmes and the 2014- 2020 Peace IV and INTERREG Va programmes, for delivery by the Special EU Programmes Body, which is the managing authority for the EU Peace and INTERREG programmes. Funding under these programmes is secured by the Northern Ireland Executive, the Irish Government and, for INTERREG, the Scottish Government. European funding is allocated in euros, and this answer assumes an exchange rate of 1.31. That is a fluctuating situation, but I trust that that gives the context to answer the Member's question.

**Mr Murphy:** I thank the Minister for his answer. I am sure that he will agree that that almost £700 million is a remarkable amount of money. It has been spent here and in the border counties on this programme alone and does not include other EU funding that is available to the Executive. The Peace funding has clearly been designed to help a society coming out of conflict and to address our infrastructure deficit in the border areas. Will the Minister offer suggestions as to how such funding would be achieved in the future if his party's wish to leave the European Union comes to pass in June?

**Mr Storey:** Obviously, that would be from the Treasury, given that we are a net beneficiary as part of the United Kingdom. As the Finance Minister in Northern Ireland, I would not have the finances were it not for the way in which, as part of the United Kingdom, we are a region that receives a substantial amount of funding from Her Majesty's Treasury.

However, the Member wants to draw us into the debate on what will happen post the referendum. I have made it very clear that the debate that leads us up to and during the referendum needs to be on the basis of facts. It has to be on the basis of figures. One figure that those parties suggesting that

we stay within the European Union have to deal with is the £20 billion that goes every year to its coffers. The European Union is an organisation that has a bloated bureaucracy; an organisation that cannot secure our borders; and an organisation that cannot resist meddling in our courts' decisions. I think that, for those and many other reasons, let alone the financial reasons, a case is being made to ensure that our money is best spent in Northern Ireland for the benefit of our fisheries, for the benefit of our farmers and for the benefit of our communities.

**Source:** <http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-08-03-2016.pdf>

**Summary:** Mr McGlone: "I thank the Minister for his answer. I am not sure about his possibly ill-founded faith in the Tories to deliver enhancements to Northern Ireland. The only precedent we have is welfare reform, and that did not work out particularly well. Has his Department carried out any audit of the potential implications of Brexit, negative or otherwise, specifically for Northern Ireland? I think that faith in the Tories to deliver post Brexit to Northern Ireland is pretty much illfounded, as I said, and grounded in a situation where the shires would benefit much more than Northern Ireland.

**Mr Storey:** Whatever the debate will be — I have repeated this, and I will say it again — it has to be based on facts and figures.

I hear Members who are always asking for more information, but all of the information necessary to make a judgement is out there, irrespective of the Government of the day, whether it is Conservative, or the Member's colleagues in the Labour Party, which we know spent money so well that it almost bust the Treasury. I think that the Member would do better to have a conversation with his colleagues in the Labour Party, who got us into a financial mess that the Conservative Party had to try and resolve. However, the issue that still needs to be resolved is for the Treasury, because it will have more money; money that will not go to Brussels but will come to Belfast, Ballymoney and other parts of the United Kingdom. Now that I have started that, I will have to go round every Member's constituency to keep them all happy. It is a matter of urgency and importance, and I share the fears and concerns that people have, but we have to ensure that the debate is based on the facts and figures, not fear.

**Source:** <http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-08-03-2016.pdf>



The Houses of the Oireachtas are in their Election Recess at this time.