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Participation of Johannes Hahn in the "Peace IV" event

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Johannes Hahn, Member of the EC in charge of Regional Policy, delivered a welcome speech at the "Bringing Divided Communities Together - Sharing the Experience of the EU PEACE Programme" Conference on 31 January 2013 in Brussels. Peter Robinson, First Minister of Northern Ireland, Martin McGuinness, Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, and Brendan Howlin, Irish Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and President in office of the Council, also delivered speeches. Following the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union, the European Commission invited divided communities in the EU and beyond to consider whether and how they might draw on the experience of the EU's PEACE Programme in Northern Ireland and Ireland's Border Region.



HEURE	DESCRIPTION	DUREE
00:00:00	Speech by Johannes Hahn, Member of the EC in charge of Regional Policy, (in ENGLISH): Dear First Minister and deputy First Minister, Dear Minister, Your Excellences, Ladies and gentlemen, It is a pleasure to welcome you today to this meeting here in Brussels. The aim is to celebrate the contribution of the PEACE programme to peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border regions of Ireland – and to ask how far this experience might serve as an inspiration for other divided communities. The PEACE programme has been a long standing partnership between the people and political leaders of Northern Ireland and the European Commission, supported by the governments of the UK and Ireland. Like the peace process itself, it has been through some difficult times. Recent events have shown that the threat of violence persists, even as we work for a lasting peace. But, I believe the people of Northern Ireland have shown their will to put an end to the violence – and that this determination will prevail.	00:03:25
00:03:25	Speech by Johannes Hahn (in ENGLISH): The leadership, courage and persistence shown by political leaders in Northern Ireland have been crucial. Here today, I would like to thank the First Minister and the deputy First Minister, for their efforts to open a new chapter for Northern Ireland. But, peace could never have taken root	00:02:06

in Northern Ireland, were it not for the work of committed people in both communities who worked tirelessly, often at their own risk. I had the opportunity to meet some of these individuals when I visited Northern Ireland in June 2011. I was there for the opening of the Peace Bridge in Derry/Londonderry, a fantastic project funded by the PEACE programme. That bridge is a great symbol for what we are trying to achieve and I want you to know that I keep a replica of it prominently displayed in my office. I was overwhelmed by the people I met on that trip. People from both communities who had lost loved ones, and who bear the physical and mental scars of the troubles. Their stories are breath-taking. The same people who a few years back wished each other only harm, are now working hand-in-hand to build a new shared future. Their passionate commitment and sheer determination are truly laudable. This is why I wanted to bring their experience to Brussels. I want the widest possible audience for their achievements –first because they deserve our recognition and our thanks, but also because I believe other parts of the world may be able to learn from their work. Every divided community has its own story and will have to find its own way to reconciliation. But the experience of the PEACE programme may be a source of ideas for others, or, just as important, a source of confidence that rifts can heal.

00:05:31

Speech by Johannes Hahn (in ENGLISH): Ladies and gentlemen, This event comes just as the EU has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, in recognition of our contribution to peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights over six decades. It is easy to forget that not so long ago Europe was regularly devastated by major wars. Today a war on our continent is unthinkable. This has not happened by accident: through a process of cooperation, old adversaries have become close partners. The ties that bind us together do not consist purely of treaties signed between governments. Our Europe, our peace, is guaranteed by a dense network of co-operative relationships between regions. These links bring the people of Europe together in joint efforts to solve common problems. If you want to see peace at work in the EU, go to any cross border region. There you will see how today, not only transport and trade, but jobs, the environment and health services are benefitting from cross border co-operation under EU regional policy. The PEACE programme, let us not forget, is also a cross border co-operations programme.

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00:06:56	<p>Speech by Johannes Hahn (in ENGLISH):Ladies and gentlemen, The European Union grew out of a determination to replace war with stability and prosperity. It is therefore natural that the EU supports financially and otherwise, the peace process in Northern Ireland and the border regions of Ireland. The PEACE programme is a fine example of the Union's longstanding commitment to peace and reconciliation – and rather typical of the European approach. The programme is not about quick-fixes. It is a strategic package designed to promote long-term partnerships in cross-community and cross-border co-operation. Since it began in 1994, the emphasis has been on strengthening cohesion through practical projects and developing a more inclusive society. The PEACE programme has been only one element of the peace process in Northern Ireland. But it has played an important part in maintaining the conditions in which other work could continue. In difficult times when one side was not talking to the other, representatives of the two communities were nevertheless working together implementing the PEACE programme. And, the PEACE programme has helped to give the people of Northern Ireland a sense of ownership of the peace process. This is because it is built on a bottom-up approach encouraging people to come up with their own solutions to their problems.</p>	00:01:35
00:08:31	<p>Speech by Johannes Hahn (in ENGLISH):Some may be surprised to discover that the PEACE programme is covered by the Structural Funds. But they should not be. Today's regional policy is an instrument to deliver the EU's ambitions – contributing to the creation of jobs, growth, and yes, peace. EU Regional Policy is a tool for investing in people and the regional economies. This has often meant investments in infrastructure projects. But increasingly it means support to small businesses, for innovation and other measures that can help the Union achieve the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and lift it out of the crisis. In Northern Ireland, projects aiming to change attitudes and help people to gain the necessary job skills contribute to social cohesion. Capital investment projects, such as community and business centres have a clear economic value. Through these investments in human and physical capital, the PEACE programme is helping to turn Northern Ireland away from conflict and towards the path of peace and prosperity, creating growth and jobs along the way. Creating new opportunities for the young people of Northern Ireland is essential, as the troubles of the last few weeks have illustrated. Here, as elsewhere, it is the wound that we must teach to see their communities with</p>	00:01:42

	<p>young that we must learn to see their communities with new eyes, sowing the seeds of a more tolerant society that will leave hatred behind.</p>	
00:10:13	<p>Speech by Johannes Hahn (in ENGLISH):The PEACE programme has projects operating in some very difficult and deprived areas. They aim to engage with young people to provide them with the skills and confidence to deal with and avoid sectarian violence. These projects are often accompanied by measures to provide the necessary skills to get a job. They also use sport, digital media and a variety of other tools to reach the young, to help build awareness of how to live in a diverse community, and reduce the risk of youngsters getting involved in dissident groups.Here I would also like to mention that alongside the PEACE programme, the Commission works with the Northern Ireland Executive in a Task Force set up by President Barroso in 2007 to build opportunities across the policy spectrum.So, what's next? Consolidating peace is something that will take generations. The needs will change, but as recent events remind us, there is still plenty of work to do. Everyone here knows that current budget negotiations are tough and the pressure on the EU finances is intense. I am sure we were all pleased to see the recent proposal from the President of the European Council for an allocation of € 150 million for the PEACE programme for the next financial period. Whatever the final outcome of the budget negotiations, it is clear that cross-community and cross-border work should continue, with the support of the EU funds available.</p>	00:01:30
00:11:43	<p>Speech by Johannes Hahn (in ENGLISH):Ladies and gentlemen, Northern Ireland has a wealth of experience in peace building that can be of use to others. I am pleased that the authorities in Northern Ireland are going ahead with plans to build a Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre on the former Maze/Long Kesh site. The centre will help spread the lessons learned in Northern Ireland and ensure the memory of peace process is recorded for future generations.It is a tribute to those who have worked on the PEACE programmes that there has already been interest from all around the world in its achievements: from Russia, Palestine, the Balkans, Colombia, South Korea. This is something to be proud of.I am looking forward to hearing the project testimonies and to discussing with you ways in which experience of the peace and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland and the border regions of Ireland could be of use to other regions in Europe and beyond.</p>	00:01:57

00:13:40	Speech by Peter Robinson, First Minister of Northern Ireland, (in ENGLISH) acknowledging the immense contribution of the EU to the success of the Northern Ireland peace process; on the progress achieved on the ground; on the role played by the European Commission; saying that unionism and nationalism have demonstrated that they can work together for the common good; they are united by their determination to build a better and truly shared future for their people; but the journey towards peace is not over yet.	00:08:58
00:22:38	Speech by Martin McGuinness, Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, (in ENGLISH) on the opening of the Peace Bridge in Derry/Londonderry in 2011 and on the symbolic of the bridge; on the initiatives for peace in Northern Ireland, among others the Maze Long Kesh project; condemning violence.	00:12:42
00:35:20	Speech by Brendan Howlin, Irish Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and President in office of the Council, (in ENGLISH):Commissioner HahnFirst Minister, Deputy First MinisterLadies and Gentlemen I must begin by thanking you for the kind invitation to this important event. It was an invitation I was happy to accept. We are all aware that conflict has marked European history. Almost two hundred years ago, not many miles from where we are today, two armies met near the small village of Waterloo. At stake was control of the strategic city of Brussels. It was a major battle -50,000 people were killed or injured at Waterloo. Present were soldiers from across what is now the European Union – from France, Britain, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. The victor on that day was Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington and later Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. His birthplace is a house across the street from my office in Dublin and is marked by a plaque I see every day. Decisive though the battle was at the time, however, it was by no means the end of war in Europe. Where diplomacy failed, war continued and, indeed, a hundred years later the continent found itself mired in the first of two wars which spread well beyond Europe and would claim the lives of tens of millions around the world.	00:02:27
00:37:47	Speech by Brendan Howlin (in ENGLISH):But new initiatives for peace emerged in Europe after the Second World War, initiatives that, against all the odds, have been successful. Recently I re-read the speeches of some of the founding fathers of the European Union and was inspired by a generation seared by war but bent on peace. In the declaration that bears his name, almost exactly five years after the end of war in Europe, one of those founding fathers. Robert Schuman set out a vision of a	00:02:28

	<p>remaining leaders, Robert Schuman set out a vision of a new Europe where war would not just unthinkable but materially impossible. There were many people at the time who thought that what was being proposed was impossible. They have been proved wrong. The idealistic aims of that immediate post-war period have had real and long-lasting practical effects. Recently we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Élysée Treaty which laid the foundations for a new relationship between France and Germany. Since then both countries have been at the very heart of the European Union. In that time the poverty and hunger that Schuman and his colleagues witnessed at the end of the war have given way to a period of unparalleled peace, security and prosperity. Last year the Nobel Committee acknowledged the contribution that the European Union had made over six decades to peace and reconciliation in Europe and to the advancement of democracy and human rights when it awarded the Union its Peace Prize. The challenge for this generation in Europe is to make that peace permanent.</p>	
00:40:15	<p>Speech by Brendan Howlin (in ENGLISH):Nowhere has the Union's contribution to peace been more evident than in Northern Ireland. This has been a long-standing commitment. It was in 1994 that the then European Commission President Jacques Delors first proposed a fund to assist the peace process after the ceasefire announcements. The first PEACE Programme, from 1995 to 1999, addressed the immediate legacy of the conflict and took advantage of the opportunities that the peace process presented. Its successor programme, from 2000 to 2006, reinforced that progress towards a peaceful and stable society through economic development and cross-border co-operation. The aim of the current programme, PEACE III, is to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society by reconciling communities and contributing to a shared society. We acknowledge, therefore, the contribution and commitment of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the other members of the European Union. We also acknowledge the substantial financial support from Europe to the International Fund for Ireland.</p>	00:01:26
00:41:41	<p>Speech by Brendan Howlin (in ENGLISH):Brussels is once again a strategic city, but this time it is in the cause of peace. The PEACE programme has made an enormous contribution to developing the peace process in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. Thousands of projects have been supported from 1995 to the present, with approximately €2 billion invested in these areas. Projects which have been supported under the PEACE Programme have helped promote social and economic stability through the promotion of community</p>	00:01:39

	<p>economic stability through the promotion of community cohesion and the development of a shared society. A wide-range of projects have been supported, from large-scale capital-build and infrastructure projects to small scale, locally focused, grass roots projects. The participative, bottom-up approach adopted by the PEACE Programme has proven to be particularly effective. The current programme is targeted at over 450 individual projects, ranging from community-based organisations to ex-prisoner groups, local authorities, arts groups, religious organisations, trauma counselling services and sporting organisations. The shared spaces initiative has brought a new pride in and shared ownership of spaces in areas which heretofore have been divided.</p>	
00:43:20	<p>Speech by Brendan Howlin (in ENGLISH):Commissioner Hahn, you were present for the opening of the Peace Bridge in Derry/Londonderry in 2011. It is a spectacular bridge that would grace any city, but spanning the River Foyle and helping to remove divisions has a special resonance for the communities involved. I am pleased to be able to take part in the work of the North South Ministerial Council, particularly the sectoral meetings which oversee the Special EU Programmes Body where I am able to work closely with my Northern counterpart, Sammy Wilson, and his Ministerial colleagues. The PEACE Programme is still very relevant for the needs of Northern Ireland and the border areas of Ireland. As noted in the PEACE III operational programme, peace building is a process which requires long-term commitment and effort to achieve real and lasting progress and to create a peaceful and stable society. Current unrest is a reminder that we cannot afford to be complacent about any aspect of the peace process. There is much work to be done. The conditions that necessitated the previous PEACE programmes – sectarianism, segregation, marginalised communities, the threat of violence and dissident activity – all still need to be addressed. There is still a need to engage with more marginalised communities and groups affected by the conflict and to build new shared spaces. The challenge for this generation in Ireland, North and South, is to make the peace permanent.</p>	00:01:53
00:45:13	<p>Speech by Brendan Howlin (in ENGLISH):The Irish Government strongly supports the establishment of a new PEACE Programme. Over the last year I have discussed this with you, Commissioner Hahn, and also with the chair of the Regional Affairs Committee in the European Parliament Danuta Hubner, and with colleagues in Belfast and London. The Taoiseach and the Tánaiste have also been active in making the case for a new programme. The response we have received has been encouraging but there is still work to be done to ensure that a new</p>	00:01:08

more to aim from to be come to ensure that a new programme is put in place. I believe we should have a new programme because I believe in the values of the programme and the contribution it has made to supporting reconciliation, to the creation of a shared society, and to addressing the legacy of the troubles. Significant challenges remain, however, and addressing them is important for the longer term viability of the peace process. Commissioner Hahn, I welcome this opportunity to share this space with you today, along with the First and Deputy First Ministers. I would like to acknowledge your continuing support for the PEACE Programme and to thank you and your team for organising this conference. The presence of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister reminds us that Northern Ireland now enjoys devolved government, thanks to their painstaking and tireless efforts as well as that of their predecessors in political leadership. I call on them and the leaders of other political parties to sustain and renew their efforts towards building a shared society – a society in which all the people of Northern Ireland can build lives of peace, progress and prosperity. Like people in so many apparently divided societies, there is more that unites the people of Northern Ireland than divides them, and political leaders have a responsibility to reflect and articulate that reality.

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Speech by Brendan Howlin (in ENGLISH): I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the Special EU Programmes Body to the ongoing success of the programmes and to thank Pat Colgan and his team for their hard work. But above all, today is about the projects and the people who make them happen. These projects are a testament to the commitment of the people of Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland to nurture and strengthen peace, to leave conflict behind and to build an inclusive and respectful society for all. Today, therefore, we celebrate the PEACE Programme. For almost two decades it has played an important and visible role in embedding peace and promoting reconciliation, and it is important that we come together to acknowledge that. We know the PEACE Programme continues to make a real difference on the ground, bringing people and communities together. People and communities are enjoying the new shared spaces that have been created; they are enjoying the opportunities that have been provided to work and learn together; above all, they are enjoying a new sense that a better future can be achieved. Thank you.

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