

My intervention during the debate on Exiting the European Union (Structural and Investment Funds), 19 February 2019

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): Before the Minister moves on from the money, will he explain how the money would be calculated, and whether we would have to make a contribution to the administration costs or just to the actual costs of the programme?

Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) (Mr Richard Harrington): If I may, Mr Speaker, I will use this opportunity to answer my right hon. Friend's earlier question about the dispute resolution. Any disputes in relation to how funding is spent are dealt with through the audit and default functions and the provisions set out in the existing funding agreements. As for his second question, I will have to give the matter some thought, as I must confess I do not know the answer. If I do not think of it in the next half an hour or so, I will certainly write to him with the answer on that. My memory is quite good and usually things come back in due course, as I know they do to you, Mr Speaker.

I mentioned that the EU is making separate legal provision for us to continue to participate in the Peace and Interreg V-A programmes. That provision is intended to enable continued access to the programmes in the event of no deal, but it does not resolve the problem of payment powers, which is why we need both the EU regulation and this statutory instrument to safeguard those programmes and to ensure the continuation of their benefits. Not having this instrument in force by exit would also prevent the Government and our devolved Administrations from paying out the guarantee to UK partners of other territorial co-operation programmes, risking their financial viability.