

**Question for written answer E-000756/2016  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Eva Paunova (PPE)**

Subject: 'Seal of Excellence' certificate

Every year, thousands of organisations in Europe apply to the Horizon 2020 Programme investing resources and time. The evaluation screens against defined criteria and identifies those proposals not mature enough to receive funding and those that are considered as meriting funding. Only some of the above threshold proposals receive funding depending on the available Horizon 2020 budget.

The 'Seal of Excellence' certificate is awarded to the applicants of above threshold not funded proposals: a certificate holder can then approach alternative funding sources (regional, national, private or public) and present the certificate as a label of a high-quality project proposal. The Horizon 2020 'SME instrument' has been selected for the introduction of the 'Seal of Excellence' because of its relevance to regional and national funders, as the project proposals are mostly led by a single SME and address small-scale research and innovation actions close to the market with a clear territorial impact.

1. What happens to projects that receive a 'Seal of Excellence', but do not get funded by the SME instrument funding scheme due to budget restraints?
2. How many of these 'Seal of Excellence' projects are then funded through structural funds?
3. Did these projects have to be re-evaluated at regional level?