

Question for written answer E-003207/2016
to the Commission
Rule 130
Dariusz Rosati (PPE)

Subject: Expert assistance for firms applying for support under the SME Instrument

Support totalling EUR 3 billion is available for SMEs under the new SME Instrument over the period 2014-2020. To date, a total of 1 600 firms from all the Member States (only 31 from Poland) have received funding under the instrument. However, although small business owners now have an opportunity to grow their firms by applying for non-repayable support, there is currently a shortage of places to which they can go in order to obtain free and relevant assistance during the application procedure.

This problem is illustrated by the fact that, in Poland (for example in Zachodniopomorskie and Lubuskie provinces), there is a clear correlation between the number of places offering such assistance and the number of firms that have successfully applied to the Commission for support.

1. Would the Commission agree that there is a need for support to be provided for SMEs, with particular reference to assistance in submitting applications for support under the Horizon 2020 programme (in particular under the SME Instrument)?
2. If so, how does it intend to go about providing such support?
3. Will it do so by ensuring that relevant instructions are more widely available for potential applicants, or perhaps by gradually setting up a network of regional contact points for business owners?