

**Question for written answer E-006213/2016
to the Commission
Rule 130
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Subject: Support for SMEs under the European Fund for Strategic Investments

In January 2015, the Commission presented a proposal to establish the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), which is intended to form the core of the Investment Plan for Europe. Together with the other pillars of the plan, namely technical support for investment and a regulatory agenda that favours investment, the EFSI should stimulate economic growth in Europe by mobilising private investments while using public funds.

Since it was established, the EFSI has set itself the goal of supporting not only major investors, but also SMEs. So far, more than 140 000 SMEs have benefited from EFSI under the 'EFSI SME Window', which is financed by the European Investment Fund. This figure is rather low for the EU as a whole.

Many SMEs are unaware of the benefits provided by EFSI and of the existence of a centre providing advisory services and technical assistance to employers or of the new European Investment Project Portal (EIPP), which gives innovative businesses the opportunity to present their ideas and projects to investors across the world.

What conclusions have been reached now, six months after the Fund became fully operational, as regards utilisation by SMEs? What further steps will the Commission take to promote EFSI among SMEs?