

**Question for written answer E-001296/2019
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Sotirios Zarianopoulos (NI)

Subject: Direct payment to all placement students from the Democritus University of Thrace

Concerns have been expressed that many placement students from the Democritus University of Thrace may not be paid for their work, since the amounts earmarked for this purpose under the relevant NSRF, with EU (ESI) co-funding, are insufficient.

As a result, thousands of students are being asked to complete unpaid traineeships, which are in many cases mandatory, effectively providing free labour for employers.

This also forms part of the EU youth strategy, which involves unpaid placements and apprenticeships for young people from working families, coupled with lifelong learning schemes, the constant objective being the acquisition of skills and qualifications in line with business needs.

Similar problems, such as a reduction in the number of subsidised traineeships, are also arising in other educational institutions, reflecting the stifling reality of continuing cuts by successive governments, with services pared down to less than even the bare essentials.

In view of this:

1. What does the Commission think of the fact that dozens of student trainees in NSRF placements co-funded by the EU (ESI) may not actually be paid for their work?
2. What view does it take of the argument that full responsibility for work placements should be assumed by national governments and not depend in each case on fixed-term EU funding?