

**Question for written answer E-001812/2012
to the Commission
Rule 117
Ivailo Kalfin (S&D)**

Subject: Commission initiative to assist Member States with high youth unemployment

At the end of January the Commission announced a plan to assist the eight Member States with the highest youth unemployment. As described, it will help them to introduce specific measures to combat the problem by using unspent structural and cohesion funds for the 2007-2013 budget period.

In this regard I would like to ask the Commission for a clarification of this initiative as follows:

What were the criteria used by the Commission to identify the eight Member States to work with to combat youth unemployment?

Why eight? Would it be possible to apply this initiative to all the Member States where youth unemployment exceeds the EU average (22% of the labour force)?

What will be the Commission's approach in relation to the amounts of structural funding which remain unallocated? Some countries have already exhausted the cohesion funding available, while others still have considerable amounts to allocate.

What are the measures that the Commission will propose to the eight Member States to combat youth unemployment? Could other Member States with high youth unemployment rates apply similar measures?

Does the Commission plan to propose a decrease in the requirements for national cofinancing of projects, stimulating SMEs and youth employment?

What is the time frame for the Commission's engagement with the eligible countries on this issue?

Which Commissioner will be in charge of proposing and implementing the measures relating to Mr Barroso's initiative?