

**Question for written answer E-007092/2017
to the Commission**
Rule 130
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Subject: Cuts to the EU structural funds

According to reports from various sources, the Commission has drawn up budget scenarios in an effort to address the problems which will arise over the next few years as expenditure increases and the impact of a reduction in the appropriations available, mainly as a result of Brexit, makes itself felt.

The budget cuts are likely to have particularly serious implications for the future of cohesion policy. Two scenarios, based on cuts of 15% and 30% respectively by comparison with the current programming period, have reportedly been drawn up. Similar scenarios have apparently been prepared for the social funds.

These funds are vital for regional development, social inclusion and sustainable urban development, however, and they are also the main source of public investment in Europe at a time when years of austerity policies have taken a heavy toll on government spending, causing social problems with which we are all too familiar.

As the recovery slowly builds, does the Commission regard it as advisable to make swingeing cuts to a policy that both boosts economic growth and job creation and combats social exclusion, quite apart from the impact such cuts might have on the efforts made by the regions in question themselves to improve their infrastructure?

With a view to halting the rising tide of populism, should the priority not in fact be to maintain or even increase the current level of investment in cohesion policy, which has a direct impact on the lives of tens of millions of Europeans?