

**Question for written answer E-002176/2018
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Damiano Zoffoli (S&D)

Subject: Europe Direct network for 2018-2020

The Commission has extended the Europe Direct network in 2018 to the period 2018-2020.

The Emilia-Romagna region is the sixth largest in Italy in terms of its size and number of inhabitants but the number of Europe Direct centres there has been reduced from four to two, leaving Romagna without any centre at all. Smaller and less populated regions such as Umbria and Abruzzo have, however, been awarded three centres.

In his answer on behalf of the Commission to my previous question on this matter (E-000836/2018 of 4.4.2018), Mr Juncker said he 'trusts' that the overall number of activities run by the regional information centres in Emilia-Romagna will not be reduced. In reality, instead of Emilia-Romagna having four centres, each of which received EUR 25 000 per year (EUR 100 000 in total), it now has two which will each receive EUR 32 000 per year (EUR 64 000 in total).

Mr Juncker also maintains in his answer that proposals for the renewed Europe Direct network were assessed on the basis of their 'merits', without giving any weight to work done in the past by the centres already in existence.

1. What does the Commission mean by the term 'merits'? How is it possible for smaller and less populated regions to be awarded a higher number of centres?
2. How does it believe it is possible to 'trust' that there will not be a general reduction in Europe Direct activity in Emilia-Romagna when it has fewer centres and less money at its disposal?