

**Question for written answer E-002461/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Distance learning for the professional and self-employed categories and for scientific experts

In order to assist the approximately 180 000 professionals, self-employed entrepreneurs and scientific experts (lawyers, doctors, engineers, etc.) who are currently deprived of their livelihood because of the COVID-19 restrictions, Greece decided to seek EU funding for a distance learning voucher scheme run from private vocational training centres. On the one hand, this meant smaller direct payments to beneficiaries, while, on the other, the total outlay was greater because of payments of around EUR 200 million to the private vocational training centres. After less than a month, it became clear that the project was a flop and the Government accordingly decided to abandon it.

In view of the amendments to the European Structural and Investment Fund rules that have already been adopted:

1. Can financial assistance be provided by the European Social Fund (or any other fund) in the form of direct income support for the above categories without the need to channel it through distance learning schemes run by private vocational training centres?
2. Was the Commission actually notified of the above rapid distance learning project and, if so, did it give its approval?