

**Question for written answer E-005758/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Exclusion of small businesses networked in a franchise organisation from European funding programmes

In view of the measures adopted in response to the coronavirus pandemic, Greece's Ministry of Development and Investment has launched a number of actions through the NSRF 2014-2020 operational programme. A new programme called 'Supporting small and micro-enterprises affected by COVID-19' will provide substantial support in the form of a non-repayable grant to small businesses facing serious liquidity problems as a result of measures to counter the spread of the virus.

On 20 October 2020, a question by Greek MP Vasilis Spanakis revealed that small businesses networked in a franchise organisation are excluded from the above programme.

This unjustified exclusion is contrary to the rules on equal opportunity and fair competition, as the businesses concerned are classified as small or micro-enterprises on the basis of specific criteria, are engaged in an activity with a Code of Activity Number with the beneficiaries, have their own tax identification number and are proven to belong to business sectors affected by the spread of the virus.

In view of this, can the Commission say:

Does the EU regulatory framework exclude micro, small and medium-sized enterprises belonging to franchises from European funding programmes, even though they meet the established criteria and are autonomous legal entities with their own tax identification number?