

**Question for written answer E-001999/2022
to the Commission**
Rule 138
David McAllister (PPE)

Subject: EU funding for small and medium-sized enterprises in Lower Saxony

The ability to compete and gain an international foothold is of key importance to the economy of Lower Saxony. This applies not only to large, internationally established companies, but also to small and medium-sized enterprises. In order to promote foreign trade, it is therefore necessary to give SMEs a solid leg-up, enabling them to gain an international foothold. Lower Saxony needs a consistent European and international marketing strategy to strengthen its economy. In addition, a sustained effort must be made to attract foreign companies. Future European Union cohesion policy is therefore of particular importance. Continued strong EU support is needed for projects in Lower Saxony in order to maintain and promote good living and working conditions. Access to EU funding for those entitled to it under the three major programmes (ERDF, ESF and EAFRD) should be straightforward and free of bureaucratic obstacles. This applies to both the application procedure and to dealings with the in-house experts responsible.

1. What is the Commission's assessment regarding the accessibility of these funds for small and medium-sized enterprises?
2. What measures is it taking to make it easier for small and medium-sized enterprises to apply?
3. What is it doing to ensure that national and local interlocutors are kept as fully apprised as possible of the various funding options?