

**Question for oral answer O-000088/2012  
to the Commission**

Rule 115

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on behalf of the ECR Group

Subject: Access of SMEs to Structural Funds

Access to sufficient capital to grow and further develop their activities is a difficulty faced by many European SMEs. The current Cohesion Policy framework seeks to address this problem, notably through special support instruments such as JEREMIE and JASMINE. However, a recent EP study on the 'impact and effectiveness of structural funds and EU policies aimed at SMEs in the regions' identifies several concerns among SMEs, e.g. the administrative burden of application, reporting and auditing requirements, the necessity to pre-finance projects and the lack of harmonised rules across funds and programmes.

1. Will the Commission relax the requirements for SMEs to pre-finance projects?
2. Does the Commission intend to simplify the future set up of JEREMIE (related to the holding funds) and enhance the access of SMEs to JEREMIE?
3. How will the Commission contribute to improving the access of SMEs to structural funding?
4. How does the Commission propose to reduce the administrative burdens of application, reporting and auditing requirements for SMEs applying for funding, particularly Small and Micro entities?
5. How will the Commission ensure that under the new regulation funding of SMEs is better targeted?
6. How will the Commission ensure better use of monitoring on the funding of SMEs through structural and cohesion funds?
7. Will the Commission put more emphasis on providing specific seed financing for young entrepreneurs?
8. Will the Commission consider ring fencing at least 15 % of the Structural Fund budget for spending related to research, development and innovation?
9. Will the Commission consider reducing allocations under budget headings that repeatedly under spend, such as the CAP or Structural Funds, and allocate these amounts to budget lines on research, development and innovation and also the specific SME financing facilities?

Tabled: 29.3.2012

Forwarded: 2.4.2012

Deadline for reply: 9.4.2012