

**Question for written answer P-004942/2014  
to the Commission  
Rule 117  
Franco Frigo (S&D)**

**Subject:** Study grants for medical specialisations

A specialist medical qualification is required by law in order to register as a practitioner in the Italian National Health Service. Legislative Decree 368/99, which transposed Directive 93/16/EEC on the free movement of doctors and the mutual recognition of their diplomas, also contains provisions on specialist medical training, providing for the adoption of a standard format for contracts which was then defined by a Prime Ministerial Decree, and comprehensive annual processing of candidates for specialist medical training. The Ministerial Decree of 1 August 2005 extended the duration of specialist training without correspondingly adjusting the budget for it, so that resources are declining as from 2014. Draft Law No 1150, converting into a law Decree-Law No 104 of 12 September 2013 providing for urgent measures relating to education, universities and research reduced the duration of specialist training and introduced the national ranking list, which will make it possible to recover specialist training grants which would not be awarded to anybody under the system of local ranking lists. However, as against the figure of 8 000 graduates per annum (a figure which is growing exponentially, so that in 2016 there are expected to be 10 000 graduates, and even more thereafter), 3 700 training contracts will be awarded in 2014 – a number which is manifestly insufficient. This gives rise to two problems. Above all, some 60 % of graduates in medicine in Italy will not be able to obtain specialist training or, therefore, to practise. Moreover, over the next few years it is anticipated that around 100 000 medical specialists will retire, causing a substantial shortage of specialists despite the existence of large numbers of graduates in medicine who are debarred from specialist training. Thus the problem will affect not only students of medicine but the entire population of Italy. Greater support for postgraduate medical training by regional authorities would avoid the necessity for many graduates from medicine courses at prestigious Italian universities to move abroad in order to obtain specialist training.

1. Would it be possible for regional authorities to draw on the European Social Fund or other sources of EU funding in order to award additional grants at regional level to compensate for the lack of national grants and meet market demand?
2. Would EU action be possible with the aim of arranging for the number of grants to be linked to estimates of the numbers of specialists who will be needed in Italy, in the same way as already happens in other European countries (France and Germany), so as to have an appropriate, and amply sufficient, number of specialists?