Priority question for written answer P-001019/2020
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: Switzerland’s financial contributions and single market access

When it was granted access to the enlarged EU single market, Switzerland agreed to make a financial contribution aimed at reducing economic and social disparities in the EU. This cohesion contribution of CHF 1.3 billion elapsed in June 2012 and has not been renewed since.

It would be desirable if the Commission or the European External Action Service (EEAS) could provide some information on the criteria used for calculating both the 1.3 billion figure in 2006 and the current Swiss proposal provisionally adopted in December 2019.

1  Can the Commission confirm that the current Swiss proposal is applicable for five years, just as the 2006 agreement was?

2  What precautionary measures has the EU taken to ensure that the proposed amount is proportional to the significant benefits that Switzerland derives from single market access? Can the Commission provide some information on the procedural and financial comparison between the Swiss contribution and the legally binding European Economic Area (EEA) contributions?

3  Given the poor track record on the Swiss financial contribution, why did the Commission disregard the EU’s negotiating mandate and agree, as would follow from the negotiated text on the Institutional Framework Agreement, to Switzerland’s ‘autonomous decision’ on its future financial contributions? Has the Commission prepared any impact assessments to consider whether this is fair, balanced and in the interests of the EU?