

**Question for written answer E-001539/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
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Subject: Competitiveness of craft businesses in the internal market

The craft industry has a strong local presence and is dependent on local social and economic conditions. Craft businesses offer customised services and products, and they react flexibly to change. Challenges such as unfavourable legal frameworks, increasing amounts of red tape, tougher financing conditions and a growing need for skilled workers are jeopardising their competitiveness.

The transformation of the energy system is leading to structural changes and political guidance that influence the market and hamper innovation. Nevertheless, we must continue to offer decentralised and individual solutions.

Bureaucracy gets in the way of the cross-border movement of services for craft businesses operating in various EU border regions. The EU institutions should work towards further deepening and perfecting the internal market.

The Member States must implement the existing rules consistently. A structured exchange is necessary in order to remove unjustified barriers and facilitate the cross-border provision of goods and services.

SME-friendly financing and the inclusion of the craft industry in innovation processes are key to ensuring the competitiveness of SMEs. The craft industry and SMEs must be included in funding programmes.

1. Can the process of posting workers within the internal market be simplified by reducing red tape?
2. Is the Commission planning to further develop the functionalities of the electronic identity card and the digital identity card in order to prevent counterfeiting related to the free movement of workers?
3. How will the Commission continue to improve SMEs' access to EU funding programmes, particularly in the areas of innovation and technology?

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