

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001537/24
to the Commission
David McAllister (PPE)
(21 August 2024)**

Subject: Taking account of the skilled trades in legislation and cutting red tape

Increasing red tape is making self-employment in the skilled trades sector increasingly unattractive. Young professionals are discouraged from starting up or taking over existing companies. New information and documentation requirements relating to compliance with environmental standards, consumer rights and health and safety measures make everyday life more difficult. These requirements are often geared towards large companies and do not take the needs of small skilled trades companies into account.

Implementing these measures is often inefficient and leads to unnecessary red tape. Master tradespeople feel they are being mistrusted by the legislator, despite their qualifications. New reporting requirements give the impression that companies are under general suspicion. There is a need for tailor-made initiatives that take into account the diversity and reality of the skilled trades sector. Uniform measures place a disproportionate burden on small companies, although they are not the primary target of the initiatives.

1. Is the Commission planning to cut red tape to reduce the burden placed on SMEs, ensure the strict application of the ‘once-only principle’ and provide digital tools to simplify the performance of formalities?
2. How will the Commission ensure that the SME test and the ‘think small first’ principle are strictly applied to all EU initiatives and that the time invested and ongoing and one-off adjustment costs are compiled for each proposal and offset in accordance with the one-in-one-out principle?
3. Is the Commission planning to increase the involvement of SME organisations in the preparation of new initiatives, give greater weight to the contributions of representative associations and strengthen the role of the impact assessment Committee?

Submitted: 21.8.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Vestager on behalf of the European Commission
(15 October 2024)**

Reducing administrative burdens and simplifying implementation are key political priorities for the next mandate ⁽¹⁾. A new small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and competitiveness check for new initiatives will help design them with small businesses in mind, avoiding unnecessary burdens and too complex legislation.

The work on the reduction of burdens related to reporting obligations by 25% continues and will intensify to reduce burdens by at least 35% for SMEs.

In line with the better regulation guidelines ⁽²⁾, one-off and recurrent costs are compiled for Commission proposals ⁽³⁾. The offsetting under the ‘one-in, one-out’ approach applies to administrative costs while adjustment costs are compensated for to the greatest extent.

Your Europe ⁽⁴⁾ is the EU’s main digital tool providing information and access to digital procedures to SMEs seeking to complete EU and national level formalities. In 2023, the Commission launched a technical system ⁽⁵⁾ allowing national authorities to apply the once-only principle to a wide range of formalities.

The Commission systematically involves SME organisations in policymaking. The network of SME Envoys ⁽⁶⁾ brings together EU and Member States’ officials and SME organisations to promote SME-friendly regulation and policies.

Some SME organisations are members of the Fit for Future platform ⁽⁷⁾. Collecting direct input from companies, including through SME panel consultations, is equally important for the Commission.

⁽¹⁾ Political guidelines for the next European Commission 2024-2029, https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf

⁽²⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en

⁽³⁾ Such costs are presented in Annex 3 of impact assessment reports accompanying Commission proposals.

⁽⁴⁾ Your Europe at <https://europa.eu/youreurope/index.htm> was the Commission’s most visited website in 2023.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-building-blocks/sites/display/DIGITAL/Once+Only+Technical+System>

⁽⁶⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?lang=en&do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2666>

⁽⁷⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/evaluating-and-improving-existing-laws/refit-making-eu-law-simpler-less-costly-and-future-proof/fit-future-platform-f4f/composition/fit-future-platform-stakeholder-group-0_en

The Regulatory Scrutiny Board has already been strengthened with two additional board members with the aim to allow an enhanced focus on competitiveness.
