

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001682/24
to the Commission
Dimitris Tsiodras (PPE)
(11 September 2024)**

Subject: Measures to support small and medium-sized enterprises in the EU

Making up 99% of European businesses and providing jobs for more than 85 million Europeans, SMEs are the mainstay of the economy, both at national and European level. However, they face a number of challenges, ranging from difficulty in accessing funding, recruiting skilled workers and training them to dealing with red tape and the cost of adapting to the regulatory framework in place.

The SME strategy announced by the President of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen, is a step in the right direction.

In view of this:

1. What specific measures does the Commission intend to take to improve SMEs' access to funding sources and the absorption of European funds, given that the funds directed towards SMEs are often fragmented?
2. How will the objective of significantly reducing red tape, limiting administrative and other burdens for SMEs and simplifying the existing regulatory framework be achieved?

Submitted: 11.9.2024

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

As stated in its 2023 small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) Relief Package⁽¹⁾, the Commission expects more than EUR 200 billion to be made available to SMEs under various funding programmes, under the ongoing multiannual financial framework and under the NextGenerationEU⁽²⁾.

The political guidelines of the 2024-2029 Commission state that the next multiannual financial framework will ensure to leverage and de-risk private investment⁽³⁾.

Specific measures to improve SMEs' access to finance include the InvestEU programme⁽⁴⁾, Horizon Europe⁽⁵⁾ or the European Innovation Council⁽⁶⁾. Financing support, *inter alia*, includes loans, guarantees or equity investments boosting investment and job creation.

In programmes such as Horizon Europe, the increased use of tools such as lump-sum payments aim to simplify administrative procedures and reduce red tape mainly for SMEs. Additionally, the EU Funding & Tenders Portal⁽⁷⁾ has recently been revamped to provide a simpler access to funding.

Reducing administrative burdens and simplifying implementation are key political priorities for the next mandate of the Commission⁽⁸⁾.

A SME and competitiveness check for new initiatives will help design them with small businesses in mind, avoiding unnecessary burdens and too complex legislation.

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

Political and technical dialogues with stakeholders through implementation dialogues and reality checks will further support the work on simplification and burden reduction and will be particularly relevant for SMEs.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2023) 535 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2023%3A535%3AFIN>

⁽²⁾ COM(2020) 456 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0456>

⁽³⁾ Europe's choice, 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

⁽⁴⁾ https://investeu.europa.eu/investeu-programme_en

⁽⁵⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

⁽⁶⁾ https://eic.ec.europa.eu/index_en

⁽⁷⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>. More information on EU funding can be found at: https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/finance-funding/getting-funding/index_en.htm

⁽⁸⁾ See footnote 3.

Moreover stress-testing of the whole EU *acquis* will detect implementation challenges and identify scope for simplification.
