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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné
on behalf of the European Commission
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The European Competitiveness Fund¹ (ECF) is designed to strengthen the competitiveness of the EU, as highlighted in Draghi² and Letta³ reports and the Competitiveness Compass⁴. It intends to support projects, innovators and companies, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), that will help the Union build a competitive edge in strategic sectors and deliver high EU added value. The ECF aims to support all EU Member States and regions by building on territorial strengths and value chains of strategic technologies. It will make flexible use of its entire financial toolbox, in line with the needs of projects and companies, including SMEs.

The elements of the ECF contributing to ensuring geographical coverage and supporting SMEs across all EU Member States include the consolidation of several programmes into a single fund that will simplify the funding picture for SMEs. They will benefit from a clearer, more unified structure, a common rulebook, and a single point of access.

It also includes the project advisory and business support, e.g. through the EU4Business Network⁵ present in all Member States, which will provide support on the ground across the entire EU, in particular for SMEs, and in less-developed regions.

Besides, there is a focus on strengthening Union's value chains, for example through the Single Market Value Chain Builder, that will help integrate suppliers, manufacturers, and innovators from different Member States.

Finally, the ECF InvestEU⁶ Instrument will be deployed by the European Investment Bank Group, international financial institutions and national promotional banks and institutions, which allows to address specific financing needs across all Member States, including for SMEs.

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/publications/european-competitiveness-fund_en.

² https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/draghi-report_en.

³ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/ny3j24sm/much-more-than-a-market-report-by-enrico-letta.pdf>.

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/competitiveness-compass_en.

⁵ Which will build on the Enterprise Europe Network and the European Cluster Collaboration Network.

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02021R0523-20251110>.