

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-004591/25
to the Commission**

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(18 November 2025)

Subject: Safeguarding small and medium-sized enterprises support in the next EU budget

The Commission's proposal for the 2028-2034 multiannual financial framework introduces a new competitiveness fund aimed at boosting EU industrial capacity and economic resilience. However, the proposal lacks clarity on ring-fencing for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and SME-focused support structures, such as the Enterprise Europe Network clusters, and the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme.

Article 28 of the proposal suggests a consolidation of competitiveness instruments but does not specify minimum allocations or safeguards to maintain, let alone increase, funding for proven SME ecosystems. Given that 99% of EU companies are SMEs, employing two-thirds of the workforce, the absence of clear protection raises concerns about de-prioritisation of grassroots business support in favour of large-scale industrial projects.

Can the Commission clarify:

1. Whether the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), clusters and Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs will be explicitly protected and adequately funded under the new 'EU for Business' network?
2. What guarantees exist that funding dedicated to SMEs will not decrease in real or relative terms compared to the current multiannual financial framework?
3. Whether minimum funding for SME support will be introduced in Article 28 or related annexes?

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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné on behalf of the European Commission
(5 January 2026)

The Enterprise Europe Network, the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and other established networks, including Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, currently funded by the Single Market Programme, possess expertise in providing services for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The EU for Business Network, to be established under the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) ⁽¹⁾, will build on these and other networks, leading to streamlining and simplifying the support landscape for SMEs. The scope and budget will be defined in the ECF work programme(s) and will depend on the specific annual budget allocation.

The Commission proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) will also simplify and accelerate funding for SMEs and establish a single point of access for all EU funding: the Single Gateway ⁽²⁾.

The Commission's proposal on the ECF does not foresee a dedicated budget allocation, but it has a strong overall focus on SMEs, which should result in increase of SME participation.

It provides for advisory and support services, via the EU for Business Network, project advisory, actions to improve business environment for SMEs and facilitate access to markets, and dedicated, sector-specific SME actions to be included in the four ECF policy windows.

SMEs are also a target of the 'Value chain builder' and the 'EU Tech frontrunners', aiming to accelerate innovation, strengthen industrial capabilities, and safeguard strategic autonomy.

Some components of the Commission's proposal on Horizon Europe ⁽³⁾, focus also on SMEs and small mid-caps.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52025PC0555>.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52025PC0545>.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0543>.