

**Question for written answer E-015957/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**

Subject: Promotion of social entrepreneurship and social innovations in the EU

More than 14 million people work in the sector of social and solidarity economy in the EU, and social enterprises are one of the key sectors that create jobs. Social enterprises provide work opportunities for those furthest from the labour market, for whom unemployment often turns into long-term unemployment. This sector also has the potential to significantly contribute to reducing youth unemployment in the EU, as a social entrepreneurship model is often attractive to young people and gives them the opportunity to develop innovative solutions in response to the current economic, social and environmental problems. Gender inequality in social business also is less than in traditional forms of business because women social entrepreneurs greatly contribute to the reduction of social exclusion and the creation of new development opportunities. The above shows the two-fold possibilities of this sector: the creation of new jobs even in times of crisis, while strengthening social and territorial cohesion in Europe, particularly in helping to involve service users in the labour market.

However, at the European Union level, social and solidarity economy remains little recognised and still there is a number of legal obstacles for enterprises of this sector to receive EU funding or to participate in public procurement, so the development of this section at the EU level is hardly encouraged.

What actions at EU level does the Commission intend to take to promote social entrepreneurship and social innovation in the European Union?