

**Question for written answer E-014746/2015**  
**to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Michel Dantin (PPE)**

Subject: Terms of payment in service contracts for pilot projects at the Commission

The Commission lays down in a service contract the terms of payment for pilot projects which it launches. The contract provides for a first payment of 40% to be made at the start of the project, followed by a second payment of 60% within 60 days of completion of the project. These payments are dependent upon the approval of a report, with the Commission reserving the right to suspend payment if it considers the request inadmissible. These terms are unfavourable to contractors, particularly SMEs, which need to pay a large part of the costs up front and face uncertainty over payment deadlines.

1. With the European Union aiming to include more SMEs in its development programmes, is the Commission considering a review of these contractual terms so as to remove the existing barriers?
2. Is the Commission considering, for example, spreading the payments more progressively throughout the duration of the project, enabling participants to cover their operating costs?
3. The article providing for payments to be suspended if the report is not approved seems excessive and has frequently been criticised. Does the Commission have any details about the average time between the completion of a project and the actual payment?