Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: redundancies in the manufacture of natural stone products in Spain

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PURPOSE: to mobilise the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in respect of redundancies in the manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products (natural stone) in Spain.

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was established by Council Regulation No 1927/2006 to provide additional support to redundant workers who suffer from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns and to assist them with their reintegration into the labour market.

The Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline allows for the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) through a flexibility mechanism, within the annual ceiling of EUR 500 million over and above the relevant headings of the financial framework.

The Commission services have carried out a thorough examination of the application submitted by Spain to mobilise the EGF. The main elements of the assessment are as follows:

Spain:application EGF/2010/005 ES/Comunidad Valenciana Natural Stone from Spain): on 9 March 2010, Spain submitted application EGF/2010/005 ES/Comunidad Valenciana Natural Stone for a financial contribution from the EGF, following redundancies in 66 enterprises operating in the NACE Revision 2 Division 23 (manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products) in the NUTS II region of Comunidad Valenciana (ES52) in Spain. The application was supplemented by additional information up to 25 May 2010.

In order to establish the link between the redundancies and the global financial and economic crisis, Spain argues that the construction sector has been severely affected by the crisis. The collapse of the subprime mortgage market in the USA, with major adverse consequences for banks and financial markets around the globe, had as a direct result the reduction of the capital base of financial institutions, rendering many of them less capable of lending and more cautious. Therefore loans to the construction sector or to individuals have been drastically reduced and the demand for new houses decreased due to declining consumer confidence and the lack of cash. In parallel, the Commission recognised that the construction industry in the EU has seen demand plummet as a result of the crisis. The demand for finished natural stone products (flooring, facing of buildings, etc) is closely linked to demand in the construction sector and has equally plummeted.

Spain submitted this application under the intervention criteria of Article 2(b) of Regulation (EC) No 1927 /2006, which requires at least 500 redundancies over a nine-month period in enterprises operating in the same NACE Revision 2 Division in one region or two contiguous regions at NUTS II level. The application cites 528 redundancies in 66 enterprises classified in the same NACE Revision 2 Division during the nine-month reference period from 31 March 2009 to 30 December 2009, all located in a single region at NUTS II level, the Comunidad Valenciana.

After a thorough examination of this application, the Commission has concluded in accordance with Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 that the conditions for a financial contribution under this Regulation are met.

On the basis of the application from Spain, the proposed contribution from the EGF to the coordinated package of personalised services is **EUR 1 422 850**, representing 65% of the total cost.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: no impact assessment was carried out.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION: considering the maximum possible amount of a financial contribution from the EGF under Article 10(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006, as well as the scope for reallocating appropriations, the Commission proposes to mobilise the EGF for the total amount of **EUR 1 422 850** to be allocated under heading 1a of the financial framework.

The proposed amount of financial contribution will leave more than 25% of the maximum annual amount earmarked for the EGF available for allocations during the last four months of the year.

By presenting this proposal to mobilise the EGF, the Commission initiates the simplified trialogue procedure, as required by Point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006, with a view to securing the agreement of the two arms of the budgetary authority on the need to use the EGF and the amount required. The Commission invites the first of the two arms of the budgetary authority that reaches agreement on the draft mobilisation proposal, at appropriate political level, to inform the other arm and the Commission of its intentions. In case of disagreement by either of the two arms of the budgetary authority, a formal trialogue meeting will be convened.

The Commission presents separately a transfer request in order to enter in the 2010 budget specific commitment and payment appropriations, as required in Point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006.