Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: redundancies in the steel sector in Belgium

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The Committee on Budgets adopted the report by Petri SARVAMAA (EPP, FI) on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, to the amount of **EUR 911 934** in commitment and payment appropriations in order to assist Belgium following redundancies in the steel industry.

Members recalled that the Union set up legislative and budgetary instruments to provide additional support to workers who are suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns and to assist their reintegration into the labour market.

Belgium submitted application EGF/2013/02 BE/Carsid for a financial contribution from the EGF, following 939 redundancies, with 752 persons expected to participate in the measures, linked to the closure of the production plant of Carsid SA (‘Carsid’) located in Marcinelle near Charleroi in Belgium during the reference period from 28 September 2012 to 28 January 2013. Members therefore asked the institutions to speed up mobilisation of the Fund for the amount requested, agreeing with the Commission that the conditions set out in Article 2(a) of the EGF Regulation are met.

In this respect, Members agreed with the Commission that **Belgium is entitled to a financial contribution under the EGF Regulation**.

Members also welcomed that the Commission made a prompt assessment within less than 5 months.

They welcomed the fact that, in order to provide workers with speedy assistance, the Belgian authorities decided to initiate the implementation of the personalised services to the affected workers on 1 October 2012, well ahead of the final decision on granting the EGF support for the proposed coordinated package.

Coordinated package of personalised services: Members stated that the coordinated package of personalised services to be co-funded includes following measures for the reintegration of 752 redundant workers into employment (grouped by category): (1) individual job-search assistance, case management and general information services and (2) training and retraining. They recalled the importance of improving the employability of all workers by means of adapted training and the recognition of skills and competences gained throughout a worker's professional career and expected the training on offer in the coordinated package to be adapted not only to the needs of the dismissed workers but also to the actual business environment.

Members also noted that the information provided on the coordinated package of personalised services to be funded from the EGF includes information on complementarity with actions funded by the Structural Funds. They stressed that Belgian authorities confirm that the eligible actions do not receive assistance from other Union financial instruments. At the same time, Members reiterated their call to the Commission to present a comparative evaluation of those data in its annual reports in order to ensure full respect of the existing regulations and that **no duplication of Union funded services can occur**.

New EGF: Members requested the institutions involved to make the necessary efforts to improve procedural arrangements in order to accelerate the mobilisation of the EGF. They appreciated the

improved procedure put in place by the Commission, following Parliament's request for the accelerated release of grants, aimed at presenting to the European Parliament and the Council the Commission's assessment on the eligibility of an EGF application together with the proposal to mobilise the EGF.

They underlined that further improvements in the procedure have been integrated in Regulation (EU) No 1309/2013 and that greater efficiency, transparency and visibility of the EGF will be achieved.

They stressed that, in accordance with Article 6 of the EGF Regulation, it shall be ensured that the EGF supports the reintegration of individual redundant workers into stable employment.

Lastly, Members reiterated that assistance from the EGF must not replace actions which are the responsibility of companies by virtue of national law or collective agreements nor measures restructuring companies or sectors.