Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: redundancies in the publishing activities sector in Greece

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The Committee on Budgets adopted the report by Lefteris CHRISTOFOROU (EPP, CY) on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for an amount of **EUR 3 746 700** in commitment and payment appropriations in order to assist Greece following redundancies in its publishing sector.

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.

Greek application: Greece submitted application EGF/2014/015 GR/Attica Publishing for a financial contribution from the EGF, following 705 redundancies in 46 enterprises operating in the NACE Rev. 2 division 58 (Publishing activities) in the NUTS 2 level region of Attica (EL 30) in Greece. Members noted that the conditions set out in Article 4(1)(b) of the EGF Regulation are met. **Therefore, Greece is entitled to a financial contribution under that Regulation**.

Members welcomed the fact that, in order to provide workers with speedy assistance, the Greek authorities decided to initiate the implementation of the personalised services to the affected workers on 28 November 2014, well ahead of the decision on granting the EGF support for the proposed coordinated package.

Nature of the redundancies: Members considered that the redundancies in the publishing sector of the Attica region are linked to the global financial and economic crisis, that, on the one hand, decreased the available household income, resulting in a huge drop of purchasing power and drastically reduced loans to enterprises and individuals due to the lack of cash in the Greek banks. They noted that these redundancies are expected to have huge negative impacts on the Attica region, which already has the largest number of all the unemployed people in Greece as compared to the other 12 regions.

A package of personalised services: Members noted that the coordinated package of personalised services to be co-funded consists of occupational guidance, training, retraining and vocational training, specialised training and education, job-search, training and mobility allowances. They welcomed the fact that these services have been drawn up in consultation with the representatives of the targeted beneficiaries and it was they who suggested to the Greek Labour Ministry to apply for the EGF, pointing out its prompt impact and effectiveness.

Occupational guidance: Members welcomed that all workers have been offered occupational guidance consisting of various stages, which will provide them with individual, personalised advice and plans to reintegrate into employment. These measures should take into account the emerging opportunities that the new web media could provide for these workers.

Members noted that most of the requested funds are to support business start-ups in the form of self-employment subsidies (EUR 1.2 million) and training measures including vocational training and mobility allowances.

They stressed that the maximum eligible amount of EUR 15 000 will be granted to up to 80 selected workers as a contribution to setting up their own businesses. The aim of that measure is to promote entrepreneurship by providing funding to viable business initiatives, which should result in the creation of further workplaces in the medium term.

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.

Lastly, they stressed that EGF assistance can co-finance only active labour market measures which lead to durable, long-term employment.