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

2016/2013(BUD) - 25/02/2016 - Budgetary text adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted by 558 votes to 83, with 4 abstentions, a resolution 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 1 095 544** in commitment and payment appropriations in order to assist Belgium following redundancies in its glass sector.

Parliament 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.

**Belgian application**: Belgium submitted application EGF/2015/007 BE/Hainaut-Namur Glass for a financial contribution from the EGF, following redundancies in the economic sector classified under the NACE Revision 2 Division 23 (Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products) in the NUTS level 2 regions of Hainaut and Namur in Belgium. 412 redundant workers, as well as 100 young people from the Hainaut Region not in employment, education or training (NEETs) under the age of 25, are expected to participate in the measures. 144 of these workers were made redundant following the closure of the production plant in Roux (Hainaut), owned by AGC Europe SA, and 268 following the closure of the production plant in Auvelais (Namur Region), owned by Saint-Gobain Glass Benelux.

This application does not fulfil the eligibility criteria set down in Article 4(1) of the EGF Regulation.

It was submitted under the intervention criteria, which allow for derogation under exceptional circumstances, notably Article 4(2) of the EGF Regulation in the case of the redundant workers, and Article 6(2) of the EGF Regulation in the case of the NEETs.

Therefore, Belgium is entitled to a financial contribution.

**Nature of the redundancies**: Parliament noted that in recent years the Union trade in glass products has undergone serious disruptions and that in Wallonia, several of large enterprises have faced difficulties in the recent years. It noted that employment in the glass sector as a whole in Europe decreased by 32% and that in Wallonia, the number of jobs in the glass sector in the regions of Namur and Hainaut decreased by 19% between 2007 and 2012 and 1 236 job losses in 2013 and 1 878 in 2014 in Wallonia.

Parliament pointed out that Hainaut, in particular, is facing a difficult labour market situation with an employment rate 9.2% lower than the national average. It noted that, in 2013, the Saint-Gobain Group was forced to close another production plant in a deindustrialised zone in Wallonia (SaintGobain Sekurit application).

**A package of personalised services**: Parliament welcomed the fact that the Belgian authorities started providing the personalised services to the affected workers on 10 September 2014, well ahead of the decision on the granting the EGF support for the proposed coordinated package.

It noted that Belgium is planning seven types of measures for redundant workers covered by this application:

- support/guidance/interpretation,
- facilitating job-search,
- integrated training,
- transfer of experiences,
- support for enterprise creation,
- support for collective projects,
- job-search and training allowances.

It also welcomed that the application contains measures specifically aimed to provide assistance to NEETs and appreciated that the allowances and incentives to be provided as part of the proposed measures are limited to 5.52% of the total estimated costs.

Members recalled that in line with the EGF Regulation, the design of the coordinated package of personalised services supported by the EGF should anticipate future labour market perspectives and required skills and should be compatible with the shift towards a resource-efficient and sustainable economy.

Parliament underlined that in the case of successive applications from the same geographical region, the Commission should collect and analyse the experiences from previous applications and ensure that, in the case of new applications, any conclusion of that analysis is taken into due account. It noted that the Belgian authorities confirm that the eligible actions do not receive assistance from other Union financial instruments.

It also 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, Parliament appreciated the improved procedure put in place by the Commission, following the Parliament's request for the accelerated release of grants.