

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

2019/2114(BUD) - 14/11/2019 - Budgetary text adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted by 558 votes to 63, with 43 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 (EGF) following an application from Belgium (EGF/2019/001 BE /Carrefour).

Parliament approved the proposal to mobilise the EGF to provide a financial contribution of EUR 1 632 028 in commitment and payment appropriations within the Union budget for 2019 to assist Belgium, which is facing redundancies in the retail trade. This amount represents 60% of the total cost of EUR 2 720 047, comprising expenditure for personalised services up to EUR 2 665 047 and expenditure for preparatory, management, information and publicity, control and reporting activities of EUR 55 000.

Reasons for the redundancies

Parliament acknowledged that retail trade is going through a period of major change, due to globalisation (e-commerce, online shopping), resulting in redundancies and that changing patterns in consumers' habits and digitalisation also have an impact on retail trade. The redundancies in Carrefour Belgique SA do not directly concern the food industry, but mostly pertain to the e-commerce of goods such as books and electronic devices.

Given that these kind of redundancies may further increase in the future due to digitalisation, Members suggested that this issue should be discussed in the framework of the future EGF in the next multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027.

Targeted beneficiaries

Parliament noted that the application relates in total to 1 019 workers made redundant in Carrefour Belgique SA in the whole of Belgium. Belgium expects that only 400 out of the total eligible beneficiaries will participate in the measures, namely workers made redundant in Wallonia as those redundancies have a particularly significant adverse impact on the employment situation in the region.

Furthermore, Belgium proposes personalised services co-financed by the EGF to up to 330 young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) under the age of 25 on the date of submission of the application.

Proposed measures

Belgium is planning five types of actions for the redundant workers covered by this application: (i) support /guidance/integration, (ii) training, retraining and vocational training, (iii) support towards business creation, (iv) contribution to business start-up, (v) allowances.

Parliament welcomed that the co-ordinated package of personalised services was drawn up by Belgium in consultation with the social partners, in particular with trade unions, vocational counsellors and social workers, in order to reconsider various redeployment solutions adapted to the needs of the redundant

workers. Carrefour Belgique SA is expected to ensure the necessary high-quality social dialogue with its workers during this process.