

# Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: redundancies in the air transport services in Belgium

2021/0109(BUD) - 07/06/2021 - Budgetary text adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted 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 by Belgium -EGF/2020/005 BE/Swissport.

Parliament approved the proposal for a decision to mobilise the EGF to provide a financial contribution of **EUR 3 719 224** in commitment and payment appropriations from the Union budget for the financial year 2021 in response to the application from Belgium, which is facing redundancies in the air transport sector.

This contribution represents 60% of the total cost of EUR 6 198 708, corresponding to expenditure on personalised services of EUR 5 977 108 and expenditure on preparatory, management, information and publicity, monitoring and reporting activities of EUR 221 600.

## *Link between the redundancies and a global financial and economic crisis*

The resolution noted that the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting global economic crisis have caused a considerable shock to the travel industry in Belgium, in particular to air carriers and companies operating at Brussels Airport. In the first week of the lockdown (16-22 March 2020), the number of flights fell by 58% compared to January 2020 and passenger aircraft movements at the airport almost ceased in the following weeks.

Swissport Belgium, one of Brussels Airport's two ground handling service providers, was responsible for 60% of the airport's handling and cleaning services. On 9 June 2020, after several weeks of almost no ground services at Brussels Airport, Swissport Belgium was declared bankrupt due to a lack of liquidity, which led to the redundancies concerned.

## *Eligible beneficiaries*

The application concerns a total of **1 468 workers, of which 1 086 men and 382 women, made redundant within the company Swissport Belgium**. All the redundant workers should be affected by the measures.

Parliament pointed out that the sudden closure of some key sectors in Belgium (catering, tourism, culture, etc.) has pushed the unemployment rate in Brussels to 15% in the third quarter of 2020. Moreover, a large part of the workforce previously employed by Swissport Belgium is from disadvantaged groups, as they are mainly low-skilled and semi-skilled workers and about one third (32.5%) are over 50 years old.

The measures in the application should therefore include and support all workers, without discrimination and regardless of their nationality.

## *Personalised services*

The personalised services to be provided to workers and the self-employed include information, job-search assistance and professional orientation, training, support and assistance for business start-ups,

incentives and benefits. Members welcomed the fact that the co-ordinated package of personalised services was established by Belgium in consultation with workers' representatives and social partners, as well as with an employment centre specialised in the aviation sector.

Parliament welcomed the fact that workers of the under-represented gender who opt for vocational training for significantly gender-unbalanced jobs will receive an additional bonus of EUR 700.

The resolution stressed the integration of the **gender perspective** as an important element of the EU budget and the need to promote it at all stages of the implementation of the EGF financial contribution.