Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: redundancies in automotive industry in Belgium

2025/0061(BUD) - 06/05/2025 - Budgetary text adopted by Parliament

The European Parliament adopted by 598 votes to 48, with 5 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) for workers made redundant following a request from Belgium (EGF/2024/003 BE/Van Hool).

Parliament approved the proposal for a decision to mobilise the EGF to provide a financial contribution of **EUR 7 999 015** in commitment and payment appropriations to the Union budget for the financial year 2025 in response to the request submitted by Belgium following redundancies at Van Hool NV, Belgium (automotive sector).

This contribution represents 85% of the total cost of EUR 9 410 607, which corresponds to expenditure on personalised services of EUR 9 034 607 and expenditure on preparation, management, information and publicity activities, as well as control and reporting activities, of EUR 376 000.

Events leading to the displacements

The European automotive and equipment industry is facing unprecedented pressure from both external and internal challenges, such as distorted competition, particularly in the electric vehicle sector due to unfair subsidies from China, and high energy costs due to major restructuring.

Van Hool specialised in the manufacture of buses, coaches, trolleybuses, and trailers. The decline in demand for coaches following the pandemic led to a decline in Van Hool's average sales in Europe and a sharp decline in its profitability. Rising inflation and disrupted supply chains further increased pressure on the company's margins.

Beneficiaries

The application concerns 2 411 workers made redundant at Van Hool, and the total number of beneficiaries is **2 397**.

Parliament pointed out that, according to the Federation of Belgian Enterprises (VBO), the Belgian industrial sector is currently in decline. The industrial sector has always played an important role in the Lier region, which is why the current industrial decline is having a significant impact on the Lier labour market.

Members drew attention to the profile of the displaced workers, a third of whom are aged 50 or over, and 80% of whom have a secondary education or less and outdated skills. Workers will need targeted assistance focused on upskilling and retraining to increase their chances of finding employment.

Personalised services

Members welcomed the fact that the personalised services to be provided to workers include the following actions: social intervention advisor and workers’ registration, outplacement, job search assistance and job

placement, vocational guidance, retraining and vocational training, and on-the-job training. They highlighted in particular services related to targeted assistance and personal assessment, as well as ICT training, which contributes to upskilling required in the digital age.

The resolution noted that the Belgian authorities have confirmed that the principles of **equal treatment and non-discrimination** will be respected in access to and implementation of the proposed actions, and that double financing will be prevented. It recalled that the Belgian authorities must ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of the gender perspective are an integral part of the implementation and are promoted throughout the implementation period.

The Belgian authorities are required to report the origin of Union funding and ensure its visibility, as well as to highlight the added value of Union intervention.