



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2021)0266

Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: application EGF/2020/005 BE/Swissport – Belgium

European Parliament resolution of 8 June 2021 on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund following an application from Belgium – EGF/2020/005 BE/Swissport (COM(2021)0212 – C9-0159/2021 – 2021/0109(BUD))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2021)0212 – C9-0159/2021),
 - having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1309/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2014-2020) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006¹ (EGF Regulation),
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021-2027², and in particular Article 8 thereof,
 - having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources³, (IIA of 16 December 2020), and in particular point 9 thereof,
 - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Regional Development,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A9-0188/2021),
- A. whereas the Union has 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 or of the global financial and economic crisis, and to assist their

¹ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 855.

² OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 11.

³ OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 28.

reintegration into the labour market; whereas this assistance is made through a financial support given to workers and the companies for which they worked;

- B. whereas Belgium submitted application EGF/2020/005 BE/Swissport for a financial contribution from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), following 1 468 redundancies¹ in the company Swissport Belgium, within a reference period for the application from 9 June 2020 to 9 October 2020;
- C. whereas on 27 April 2021, the Commission adopted a proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF in favour of Belgium to support the reintegration in the labour market of 1 468 targeted beneficiaries;
- D. whereas the application relates to 1 468 workers made redundant in the company Swissport Belgium;
- E. whereas the application is based on the intervention criteria of Article 4(1), point (a), of the EGF Regulation, which requires at least 500 workers being made redundant over a reference period of four months in an enterprise in a Member State, including workers made redundant by suppliers and downstream producers and/or self-employed persons whose activity has ceased;
- F. whereas the COVID-19 pandemic and the following global economic crisis caused an immense shock to the travel industry in Belgium, especially the air carriers and enterprises operating at Brussels Airport, where in the first week of lockdown (16-22 March 2020), the number of flights decreased by 58% compared to January 2020, and the movements of passenger planes at the airport stopped almost completely over the following weeks;
- G. whereas in 2020 overall, international passenger traffic dropped by 60 % compared to 2019 (from 4,5 billion passengers to 1,8 billion) and 50 % of global aircraft was put into storage; whereas Swissport Belgium, one of the Brussels Airport's two ground handlers, was responsible for 60 % of the handling and cleaning services at the airport;
- H. whereas on 9 June 2020, after weeks of ground services being almost non-existent at Brussels Airport, Swissport Belgium was declared bankrupt due to a lack of liquidity, resulting in the redundancies concerned;
- I. whereas Swissport Belgium had been successfully implementing a recovery plan before the pandemic struck, forecasting a 37 % reduction in losses for 2020 compared to 2019, and was declared bankrupt on 9 June 2020 by the Brussels Court;
- J. whereas due to the great uncertainty about the short-term recovery of the passenger air transport sector, no enterprise has shown any interest in taking over the handling activities of Swissport Belgium;
- K. whereas there is a real risk that further bankruptcies among ground handling service providers may take place throughout 2021;
- L. whereas this is one of the first mobilisations of the EGF due to the COVID-19 crisis, following the adoption by the European Parliament of its resolution of 18 June 2020 on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF/2020/000 TA 2020 -

¹ Within the meaning of Article 3 of the EGF Regulation.

Technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission)¹, stating that the EGF could be mobilised to support permanently dismissed workers and the self-employed in the context of the global crisis caused by COVID-19 without amending Regulation (EU) No 1309/2013;

- M. whereas the Commission declared that the health crisis resulted in an economic crisis, set out a recovery plan for the economy, and underlined the role of the EGF as an emergency tool²;
1. Agrees with the Commission that the conditions set out in Article 4(1), point (a), of the EGF Regulation are met and that Belgium is entitled to a financial contribution of EUR 3 719 224 under that Regulation, which represents 60 % of the total cost of EUR 6 198 708, comprising expenditure for personalised services of EUR 5 977 108 and expenditure for preparatory, management, information and publicity, control and reporting activities of EUR 221 600;
 2. Notes that the Belgian authorities submitted the application on 22 December 2020, and that, following the provision of additional information by Belgium, the Commission finalised its assessment on 27 April 2021 and notified it to Parliament on the same day;
 3. Notes that all the procedural requirements were met;
 4. Notes that the application relates in total to 1 468 workers made redundant in the company Swissport Belgium of which 1086 are men and 382 are women; welcomes the fact that all the redundant workers are expected to participate in the measures;
 5. Recalls that the sudden shutdown of certain key sectors in Belgium (catering, tourism, culture, etc.) has caused unemployment in Brussels to reach 15 % in Q3 2020³, and that a large proportion of the former workforce of Swissport Belgium are disadvantaged groups, as they are mostly low-skilled and semi-skilled workers and about one third (32,5%) are over 50 years old;
 6. Underlines the need for all employees, without discrimination and independently of their nationality, to be integrated and supported by the measures included in this EGF mobilisation;
 7. Notes that Belgium started providing personalised services to the targeted beneficiaries on 9 June 2020 and that the period of eligibility for a financial contribution from the EGF will therefore be from 9 June 2020 to 22 December 2022;
 8. Recalls that personalised services to be provided to the workers and self-employed persons consist of the following actions: information, job-search assistance and vocational guidance, training, support for and contribution to business creation, as well as incentives and allowances, welcomes that workers of the under-represented gender who opt for vocational training for significantly gender-unbalanced jobs⁴ will receive an additional bonus of EUR 700; reiterates the integration of the gender perspectives as an important

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0141.

² COM(2020)0442

³ <https://statbel.fgov.be/fr/themes/emploi-formation/marche-du-travail/emploi-et-chomage>

⁴ Occupations with at least 75% of workers belonging to the same gender.

feature of the Union budget, and considers that it should be promoted at all stages of the implementation of the financial contribution from the EGF;

9. Notes that Belgium started incurring administrative expenditure to implement the EGF on 10 June 2020 and that expenditure on preparatory, management, information and publicity, control and reporting activities will therefore be eligible for a financial contribution from the EGF from 10 June 2020 to 22 June 2023;
10. Welcomes that the co-ordinated package of personalised services was drawn up by Belgium in consultation with workers' representatives and the social partners as well as an employment centre specialized in the aviation sector;
11. Stresses that the Belgian authorities have confirmed that the eligible actions do not receive assistance from other Union funds or financial instruments, and that the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination will be respected in the access to the proposed actions and their implementation;
12. Recalls that financial support through the EGF should be provided as swiftly and effectively as possible; underlines the need to shorten the period of assessment of applications by the Commission to the extent possible;
13. Reiterates that assistance from the EGF must not replace actions which are the responsibility of companies, by virtue of national law or collective agreements;
14. Notes the recent increase in the number of applications for financial assistance through the EGF; expresses concern about the lingering impact of the global economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on employment and the sufficiency of the EGF to respond to all future needs;
15. Strongly supports that the EGF continues to show solidarity in 2021-2027 period while shifting the focus from the cause of restructuring to its impact; welcomes that under the new rules, decarbonisation will also be a reason for applicants to be eligible for support;
16. Approves the decision annexed to this resolution;
17. Instructs its President to sign the decision with the President of the Council and arrange for its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution, including its Annex, to the Council and the Commission.

ANNEX

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund following an application from Belgium – EGF/2020/005 BE/Swissport

(The text of this annex is not reproduced here since it corresponds to the final act, Decision (EU) 2021/1020.)