Wednesday 16 February 2022

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Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund — application EGF/2021/005 FR/Airbus — France

European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2022 on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers following an application from France — EGF/2021/005 FR/Airbus (COM(2021)0698 — C9-0011/2022 — 2021/0363(BUD))

(2022/C 342/32)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Commission proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2021)0698 — C9-0011/2022),

— having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/691of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers (EGF) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1309/2013 ([1]) ('EGF Regulation'),

— having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021-2027 ([2]), and in particular Article 8 thereof,

— having regard to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 16 December 2020 between the European Parliament, the Council and the 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 resources ([3]), ('IIA of 16 December 2020'), and in particular point 9 thereof,

— having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,

— having regard to the letter of the Committee on Regional Development,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A9-0013/2022),

A. whereas the Union has set up legislative and budgetary instruments to provide additional support to workers who are suffering from the consequences of globalisation and of technological and environmental changes, such as changes in world trade patterns, trade disputes, significant changes in the trade relations of the Union or the composition of the internal market and financial or economic crises, as well as the transition to a low-carbon economy, or as a consequence of digitisation or automation;

B. whereas the Union has extended the scope of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers (EGF) to provide financial support in case of any major restructuring event, and thus covering economic effects of the coronavirus crisis;

C. whereas the on-going decarbonisation of the transport sector is expected to have various impacts on the aviation sector, and the Union plays an important role in providing the necessary solidarity through financial contributions from the EGF which aims to reintegrate beneficiaries rapidly into decent and sustainable employment within or outwith their initial sector of activity, while being compatible with a greener and more digital European economy in line with the European Green Deal;

D. whereas France submitted application EGF/2021/005 FR/Airbus for a financial contribution from the EGF, following 508 displacements in the economic sector classified under the NACE Revision 2 division 30 (Manufacture of transport equipment) in the NUTS 2 regions of Midi-Pyrénées (FRJ2) and Pays de la Loire (FRG0) in France, within a reference period for the application from 1 November 2020 to 1 March 2021;

([1]) OJ L 153, 3.5.2021, p. 48.
([2]) OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 11.
([3]) OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 28.

E. whereas the application relates to 508 displaced workers whose activity has ceased in the Economic and Social Unit (ESU) ([4]) Airbus Commercial of Airbus (Airbus SE);

F. whereas the application is based on the intervention criteria of Article 4(2), point (a), of the EGF Regulation, which requires the cessation of activity of at least 200 displaced workers over a reference period of four months in an enterprise in a Member State;

G. whereas in the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic, the general travel restrictions led to a general collapse of commercial aviation, in particular in the passenger flights sector, and according to Airbus the full recovery of the sector is not expected to happen before 2025 ([5]);

H. whereas Airbus, whose commercial aviation division represents 77 % of the overall turnover ([6]), had to reduce by one third its production levels as of April 2020 ([7]) and thus implement a restructuring plan leading to the dismissal of 4 248 posts in France ([8]);

I. whereas the French public authorities' support for long-term part time activity, duly negotiated with the workers concerned, and the boosting of a programme by the Conseil pour la recherche aéronautique civile, enabled the number of dismissals to be reduced significantly (by 2 002 posts); whereas for the other 2 246 jobs at stake, almost all workers were subject to internal mobility measures or agreed to voluntary termination packages;

J. whereas the Commission declared that the health crisis resulted in an economic crisis, set out a recovery plan for the economy following the resolutions of the European Parliament and the impetus of the French-German Initiative for the European Recovery from the Coronavirus Crisis of 18 May 2020 ([9]), and underlined the role of the EGF as an emergency tool ([10]);

K. whereas the EGF shall not exceed a maximum annual amount of EUR 186 million (in 2018 prices), as laid down in Article 8 of Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027 ([11]);

1. Agrees with the Commission that the conditions set out in Article 4(2), point (a), of the EGF Regulation are met and that France is entitled to a financial contribution of EUR 3 745 264 under that Regulation, which represents 85 % of the total cost of EUR 4 406 194, comprising only expenditure for personalised services;

2. Notes that the French authorities submitted the application on 26 July 2021, and that the Commission finalised its assessment on 19 November 2021 and notified it to Parliament on 5 January 2022;

3. Welcomes the measures undertaken by French national and local public authorities, such as the provisions of the new emergency legislation ([12]), the support plan for the aeronautics industry, the long-term part-time activity programme ([13]), and the top-up of the Ader 4 plan which significantly reduced the number of redundancies;

([4]) An economic and social unit — ESU (unite économique et sociale — UES) is a legal construct under French law that allows the grouping of enterprises that have the same management, operate in the same sector, and whose employees share the same interests, but are legally distinct enterprises, with the aim of promoting the creation of a common employee representation. The job displacements occurred in the ESU Airbus Commercial, which groups the two French subsidiaries Airbus SAS and Airbus Operations SAS of Airbus SE.

([5]) Non-published document: Airbus 'Livre 2', an internal analysis of the COVID-19 crisis and its impact on the Airbus activity sector in France.

([6]) https://lentreprise.lexpress.fr/actualites/1/actualites/le-geant-europeen-airbus-en-chiffres_2129633.html

([7]) https://www.airbus.com/newsroom/press-releases/en/2020/04/airbus-reports-first-quarter-q1-2020-results.html

([8]) According to Airbus' restructuration plan: 'Accord collectif relatif au plan d'adaptation des sociétés composant l'UES Airbus Commercial dans le contexte de la crise économique Covid-19 et ses conséquences sur l'emploi'.

([9]) https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2020/05/18/french-german-initiative-for-the-european-recovery-from-the-coronavirus-crisis

([10]) COM(2020)0442 final.

([11]) OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 11.

([12]) Loi d'urgence n°2020-734 of 17 June 2020.

([13]) Activité Partielle de Longue Durée (APLD): https://www.service-public.fr/professionnels-entreprises/vosdroits/F35381

4. Notes that the application relates in total to 508 displaced workers whose activity has ceased; further notes that France expects that 297 out of the total eligible beneficiaries will participate in the measures (targeted beneficiaries);

5. Recalls that the social impact of the redundancies is expected to be significant for both regions, and that in the first quarter of 2021, the percentage of unemployed persons already stood at 9,4 % in Occitanie and 6,9 % in Pays de la Loire ([14]);

6. Points out that in Occitanie the dismissals are expected to have a significant impact on the labour market, as the region is heavily dependent on aeronautics as the most important sector and Airbus is the largest private employer in the region;

7. Notes that Occitanie has established itself as an important ecosystem for start-ups, with potential opportunities therefore for beneficiaries wanting to start their own business; points out that a large share of the persons effected in the region has a high level of education;

8. Points out that, while in Pays de la Loire the impact of the aviation crisis on the local economy and the labour market is expected to be less detrimental, due to the high diversification of the regional economy, opportunities are expected to arise in the maritime sector and in renewable energy, which in turn requires adequate reskilling;

9. Points out that 13,5 % of the targeted beneficiaries are above 54, and 74,7 % of them are between 30 and 54 years old;

10. Notes that Airbus started providing personalised services to the targeted beneficiaries on 1 November 2020 and that the period of eligibility for a financial contribution from the EGF will therefore be from 1 November 2020 until 24 months after the date of the entry into force of the financing decision;

11. Recalls that personalised services to be provided to the workers and self-employed persons consist of the following actions: start-up grants, business creation training, allowances for expenditure related to business creation training, as well as salary top-ups;

12. Considers that those personalised services should last for a relevant period of time according to the nature of the project;

13. Welcomes that the co-ordinated package of personalised services was the result of a good collective bargaining agreement between Airbus and workers' representatives in consultation with staff and union representatives; welcomes that the financial assistance has been swiftly provided to the beneficiaries, even though additional investment for the setting up of a new business is needed in some cases;

14. Highlights that 98,7 % of the financial support is linked to the creation of start-ups and businesses, which will encourage professional reintegration and reconversion, improve the competitiveness of the regions concerned and contribute to the economic recovery;

15. Stresses that the French authorities have confirmed that the eligible actions do not receive assistance from other Union funds or financial instruments;

16. Reiterates that assistance from the EGF must not replace actions which are the responsibility of companies, by virtue of national law or collective agreements, or any other allowances or rights that beneficiaries can receive, in order to ensure full additionality of the allocation; requests that beneficiaries of the personalised services which are to be covered by the EGF be publicly and personally informed of the Union co-financing;

17. Notes that all the procedural requirements were met; underlines the need for transparency at every step of the procedure and calls for social partners' involvement in the package of service's implementation and evaluation;

18. Approves the decision annexed to this resolution;

19. 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*;

20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution, including its Annex, to the Council and the Commission;

([14]) Data collected by the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies.

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ANNEX

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers following an application from France — EGF/2021/005 FR/Airbus

(The text of this annex is not reproduced here since it corresponds to the final act, Decision (EU) 2022/359.)