European Parliament
2024-2029

TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2026)0145

Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers: application EGF/2025/008 BE/Liberty - Belgium

European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2026 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 Belgium– EGF/2025/008/BE/Liberty (COM(2026)0004 – C10-0062/2026 – 2026/0066(BUD))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to the Commission proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2026)0004 – C10-0062/2026),

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/691 of 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 (‘MFF Regulation’)[2] as amended by Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/765[3], 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

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1 OJ L 153, 3.5.2021, p. 48, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/691/oj.

2 OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 11, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2020/2093/oj.

3 Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/765 of 29 February 2024 amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027 (OJ L, 2024/765, 29.2.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/765/oj).

management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources[4], and in particular point 9 thereof,

– having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights,

– having regard to the letter from the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgets (A10-0084/2026),

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 events and changes in world trade patterns, and to assist their reintegration into the labour market; whereas this assistance is made through a financial support given to workers;

B. whereas the support should be directed to the rapid reintegration of workers and to ensure that training, retraining and vocational training better equip workers with skills aligned to the labour market needs;

C. whereas Belgium submitted application EGF/2025/008 BE/Liberty for a financial contribution from the EGF following 507 displacements[5] in Liberty Galaţi Belgian Branch (Liberty), in the economic sector classified under the NACE Revision 2 division 24 (Manufacture of basic metals) in the region of Province Liège (BE33), Wallonia, within a reference period from 24 April 2025 to 24 August 2025;

D. 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 or self-employed persons over a reference period of four months in an enterprise in a Member State;

E. whereas Liberty was declared bankrupt by Liège’s Commercial Court on 22 April 2025; whereas in Belgium bankruptcies are on the rise since 2022;

F. whereas Région Wallone and Le Forem are providing the national pre-financing and co-funding of the measures;

G. whereas the requirements laid down in Union and national legislation concerning collective redundancies have been met;

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4 OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 28, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_interinstit/2020/1222/oj.

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

H. whereas financial contributions from the EGF should be primarily directed at active labour market policy measures and personalised services that aim to reintegrate beneficiaries rapidly into the labour market offering them skills training to facilitate their access to the labour market;

I. whereas the EGF shall not exceed a maximum annual amount of EUR 30 million (in 2018 prices)[6];

1. Agrees with the Commission that the conditions set out in the EGF Regulation and in particular in Article 4(2), point (a), thereof are met and that Belgium is entitled to a financial contribution of EUR 2 033 869 under that Regulation, which represents 85 % of the total cost of EUR 2 392 788, comprising expenditure for personalised services of EUR 2 358 922 and expenditure for preparatory, management, information and publicity, control and reporting activities of EUR 33 866;

2. Notes that the Belgian authorities submitted the application on 13 November 2025, and that, following the receipt of additional information from Belgium, the Commission finalised its assessment and notified it to Parliament on 2 March 2026; stresses the need to shorten the time between an EGF application and the financing decision, while safeguarding Parliament’s budgetary rights;

3. Notes that the application relates to 507 targeted beneficiaries, who were made redundant by the company Liberty;

4. Notes that Liberty has faced years of financial difficulties prior to the bankruptcy declaration due to adverse steel market conditions, COVID-19-related supply chain disruptions, and high energy prices following Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine combined with the Union’s dependence on imported fossil fuels and insufficient deployment of cheaper energy sources; notes that Liberty Steel Liège’s galvanizing lines have been idle since December 2021, mainly because of a lack of raw materials, triggering a restructuring operation that led to its legal transfer to Liberty Galaţi in 2023; regrets that production activity did not resume despite the takeover and culminated in bankruptcy;

5. Notes that the difficulties faced by Liberty Steel are also linked to company-specific factors following its acqisition from ArcelorMittal by the GFG Alliance; stresses serious concerns about the financial sustainability of the business model and the failure to fulfill investment commitments, which contributed to the deterioriation of the plant’s economic situation and resulting redundancies;

[6] Article 8 of the MFF Regulation.

6. Notes that the region of Wallonia endured a process of deindustrialisation and economic transformation[7]; notes that Liberty’s bankruptcy represents a major social shock for Wallonia, a region whose labour market has already been weakened by other restructuring events; stresses that the steel sector remains an important economic sector for Belgium, with the ratio of steel jobs per inhabitant remaining high; calls on Belgian authorities to provide specific support tailored to these profiles to help workers further develop necessary skills to find new quality-jobs, while taking measures to reduce bankruptcies and address social disparities leading to exclusion of work force; emphasises that the Union maintains a business-friendly environment, which leverages economic growth, promotes innovation, supports technological development, strengthens competitiveness and reduces unnecessary regulatory burdens and simplifies bureaucratic procedures and stresses the need for policies that foster industrial competitiveness, territorial, economic and social cohesion and regional development; highlights the importance of a competitive and resilient European steel sector as the basis for a strong, high-quality industry and a central pillar to the Union's strategic autonomy;

7. Recalls that 1 in 4 registered job seekers in Wallonia are over the age of 50 and face greater barriers to re-entering the labour market; notes that despite their high specialisation, the job transitions of Liberty's workers are challenged by their advanced age (52 % of the workers are aged 55 or more); notes that 69 % of the workers made redundant have a low level of education;

8. Recalls that, in agreement with trade unions and regional authorities, personalised services to be provided to the workers consist of the following measures: outplacement and vocational guidance; training, retraining and vocational training, including IT skills; support towards business creations; contribution to business start-up; incentives and other allowances; highlights the importance of strengthening investment in innovation, skills and industrial modernisation in order to reinforce the competitiveness of European industry and ensure that workers are equipped for the evolving needs of the labour market;

9. Emphasises the importance of fostering high-quality, future-oriented jobs, that strengthen competitiveness, foster digital transformation, and meet labour market demands, to ensure long-term economic and social resilience; considers therefore that the mobilisation of the EGF needs to be embedded in a larger policy response on all political levels to ensure that the workers affected find adequate opportunities in line with their qualifications and skills; highlights that the EGF is an instrument of solidarity and just transition, and

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7 National Bank of Belgium. Economic Review 2024.

that the Union’s primary task must be to prevent such closures in the first place;

10. Underlines the importance of strengthening the Union’s industrial competitiveness and promoting investment in strategic industrial sectors, in order to prevent further deindustrialisation and layoffs, and support job creation; emphasises the need for transition to renewable energy, alongside other measures to ensure affordable energy prices;

11. Stresses that the Belgian authorities shall ensure the visibility of the Union funding and highlight its added value by providing effective and targeted information to beneficiaries, regional and local authorities, social partners, and the wider public;

12. Calls for thorough final evaluations together with social partners of the measures implemented, including clear and transparent information on how the funds were used, the reintegration of workers into the labour market, and whether the EGF objectives were achieved; highlights, in this context, the importance of regular monitoring of the measures financed by the EGF in order to assess their effectiveness;

13. Notes that Belgium started providing personalised services to the targeted beneficiaries on 1 June 2025 and that the period of eligibility for a financial contribution from the EGF will be from that date until 24 months after the date of the entry into force of the financing decision;

14. Notes that Belgium started incurring administrative expenditure to implement the EGF on 22 April 2025 and that such expenditure shall therefore be eligible for a financial contribution from the EGF from that date until 31 months after the date of the entry into force of the financing decision;

15. Notes that the Belgian authorities provided assurance that the principles of equality of treatment and non-discrimination will be respected in the access to the proposed actions and their implementation, and that any double financing will be prevented;

16. Reiterates that assistance from the EGF must not replace actions that are the responsibility of public authorities or companies under national law or collective agreements; recalls that the EGF is a limited, targeted and complementary mechanism and cannot replace structural economic policies, which primarily fall within the competences of Member States;

17. Approves the decision annexed to this resolution;

18. 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*;

19. 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 for Displaced Workers following an application from Belgium – EGF/2025/008 BE/Liberty

(The text of this annex is not reproduced here since it corresponds to the final act, Decision (EU) 2026/1134)