

Thursday 15 September 2016

P8_TA(2016)0361

Activities, impact and added value of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund between 2007 and 2014**European Parliament resolution of 15 September 2016 on the activities, impact and added value of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund between 2007 and 2014 (2015/2284(INI))**

(2018/C 204/22)

The European Parliament,

- 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 1927/2006 ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 546/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 amending Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 on establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the activities of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund in 2013 and 2014 (COM(2015)0355),
- having regard to the ex-post evaluation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) — Final report of August 2015,
- having regard to Special Report No 7/2013 of the Court of Auditors entitled 'Has the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund delivered EU added value in re-integrating redundant workers?',
- having regard to Eurofound ERM 2012 report entitled 'After restructuring: labour markets, working conditions and life satisfaction',
- having regard to Eurofound case study entitled 'Added value of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: A comparison of experiences in Germany and Finland (2009)',
- having regard to Eurofound ERM 2009 report entitled 'Restructuring in recession',
- having regard to its resolution of 29 September 2011 on the future of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 September 2010 on the funding and functioning of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund ⁽⁵⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 855.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 167, 29.6.2009, p. 26.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 406, 30.12.2006, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 56 E, 26.2.2013, p. 119.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 308 E, 20.10.2011, p. 30.

Thursday 15 September 2016

- having regard to the resolutions it has adopted since January 2007 on the mobilisation of the EGF, including the comments of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on the respective applications,
 - having regard to the deliberations of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs special working group on the EGF,
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Budgets, the Committee on International Trade, the Committee on Budgetary Control, the Committee on Regional Development and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A8-0227/2016),
- A. whereas the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was set up to provide support for, and express its solidarity with, workers made redundant as a result of major structural changes in world trade patterns; whereas the objective of the EGF is to contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the promotion of sustainable employment by preparing and supporting redundant workers for a new job; whereas the EGF was set up to address emergencies by providing rapid intervention and short-term assistance in response to acute and unforeseen labour market difficulties involving large scale redundancies, unlike the European Social Fund (ESF) which also provides support for redundant workers but is intended to address long-term structural imbalances mainly through life-long learning; believes the EGF should continue to operate outside the MFF during the next programming period;
- B. whereas restructuring has become more prevalent in recent years, intensifying in some sectors and spreading to others; whereas companies have responsibility for the often unforeseen effects of these decisions on communities and on the economic and social fabric of the Member State; whereas the EGF helps to cushion the negative effects of these restructuring decisions; whereas more and more EGF cases are related to the restructuring strategies of large firms and multinational corporations, which are usually decided without the involvement of workers and their representatives; whereas relocation, delocalisation, closures, mergers, acquisitions, takeovers, reorganisation of production and outsourcing of activities are the most common forms of restructuring;
- C. whereas, adaptability and proactivity when moving jobs or occupations may be hampered however by insecurity because transitions bear a potential hazard of unemployment, lower wages and social insecurity; whereas the reintegration in employment of beneficiaries of EGF cases will be more successful if it leads to quality employment;
- D. whereas cooperatives manage restructuring in a socially responsible manner and their specific cooperative governance model, based on joint ownership, democratic participation and members' control, as well as the ability of cooperatives to rely on their own financial resources and support networks, explains why cooperatives are more flexible and innovative in managing restructuring over time, as well as in creating new business;
- E. whereas Article 19 of Regulation (EU) No 1309/2013 requires the Commission to present to Parliament and to the Council every two years a quantitative and qualitative report on the activities of the EGF in the previous two years;
- F. whereas there is no European legal framework on information and consultation of workers, anticipation and management of restructuring in order to anticipate change and prevent job losses; whereas Parliament requested in its resolution of 15 January 2013 ⁽¹⁾ that the Commission, pursuant to Article 225 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, submit as soon as possible and after consulting the social partners, a proposal for a legal act on information and consultation of workers, anticipation and management of restructuring (following the detailed recommendations set out in the annex to its resolution); whereas there are significant differences at national level

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 440, 30.12.2015, p. 23.

Thursday 15 September 2016

concerning the responsibilities of employers towards their employees in this process; whereas the European social partners have been consulted twice on this matter and the Commission has failed to act; whereas the Commission has delivered disappointing responses to parliamentary resolutions on information, consultation and restructuring, highlighting the need for concrete steps in this area; whereas well developed industrial relations systems which accord workers and their representatives rights in the area of consultation and information are essential; whereas a strengthened Information and Consultation Directive could help ensure that negotiations for a suitable plan can take place in fair conditions and in a timely manner;

- G. whereas the minimal redundancy threshold was reduced from 1 000 redundancies to 500 redundancies, with the possibility that, in exceptional circumstances, or in small labour markets, an EGF application would be considered where the redundancies have a serious impact on employment and on the local, regional or national economy;
- H. whereas, since 1 January 2014, formerly self-employed persons can also be eligible beneficiaries and can receive assistance; whereas the Commission should ensure that the EGF meets the specific needs of self-employed workers as the number of self-employed people is constantly increasing; whereas, until 31 December 2017, young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) in regions eligible under the Youth Employment Initiative can benefit from EGF support in numbers equal to the number of targeted beneficiaries;
- I. whereas the current EGF aims not only to support redundant workers but also to demonstrate solidarity towards those workers;
- J. whereas the original EGF budget was EUR 500 million per year; whereas the current budget is EUR 150 million per year, with an average annual spend of approximately EUR 70 million since its inception;
- K. whereas, while the initial co-funding rate was 50 %, this was increased to 65 % for 2009-2011, reverting back to 50 % for 2012-2013, and is now 60 %;
- L. whereas between 2007 and 2014 there have been 134 applications from 20 Member States relating to 122 121 targeted workers and whereas a total of EUR 561,1 million has been requested; notes that in the 2007-2013 period the budget implementation rate was only 55 %; whereas between 2007 and 2014 the manufacturing sector accounted for the largest number of applications, in particular the automotive industry, which concerned 29 000 out of 122 121 workers (23 % of the total covered by the submitted applications); whereas to date the economic crisis has hit small businesses with fewer than 500 employees hardest;
- M. whereas the European Court of Auditors recommends that Parliament, the Commission and the Council consider limiting EU funding to measures likely to provide EU added value, rather than funding already existing national workers' income support schemes as provided for in Article 7(1)(b); whereas EGF measures are found to have most value added when used to co-finance services for redundant workers not ordinarily existing under Member State employment benefit systems, where these services are focused on training rather than allowances and in cases where these measures have been personalised and are complementary to mainstream provision, in particular for the most vulnerable groups of workers made redundant; notes in this connection the need to invest in the potential of former employees and the importance of a full assessment of local labour market needs and skills requirements as this should form the basis for training and competence building in order to help facilitate a quick reintegration of workers into the labour market; recalls that Member States have the obligation to implement the EGF budget effectively;

Thursday 15 September 2016

- N. whereas the EGF does not resolve the problem of unemployment in the EU; whereas resolving the unemployment crisis in the EU requires putting the creation, protection and sustainability of jobs at the heart of EU policy; whereas unemployment rates in the EU, especially among young people and the long-term unemployed, mean that initiatives offering new career prospects are urgently needed;
- O. whereas the reference period for the assessment of the EGF for the purposes of this report is 2007-2014; whereas the Commission's ex-post evaluation covers the period 2007-2013 and the Court of Auditors' report audits the period 2007-2012;
- P. whereas the principles of gender equality and of non-discrimination, which are among the Union's core values and are enshrined in the Europe 2020 strategy, should be ensured and promoted when implementing the EGF;
1. Notes the ex-post evaluation of the EGF and the first biennial report; notes that the Commission complies with its reporting obligation; considers that these and other reports are not sufficient to fully ensure the transparency and efficiency of the EGF; calls on the Member States who have benefited from the EGF to make all data and evaluations of the cases publicly available and to include a gender impact assessment in the reporting of cases; strongly encourages all Member States to make publicly available their applications and final reports under the current regulation in a timely manner; while the Commission complies with its reporting obligations believes that the Commission could make public all relevant documents relating to EGF cases, including their internal mission reports following monitoring visits to ongoing applications in Member States;
 2. Welcomes the extension of the funding period from one to two years; recalls that according to Eurofound research, 12 months was not a long enough period to help all redundant workers, especially the most vulnerable groups such as low-skilled workers, older workers, women and particularly single parents;
 3. Notes that the evaluations of the EGF show that the results of interventions by this fund are influenced by factors such as the level of education and qualifications of the targeted workers, as well as by the capacity of absorption of the relevant labour markets and the GDP of the recipient countries; emphasises that such factors are mostly influenced by long-term measures which can be effectively supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds); points to the need to allow for these factors and for the local labour market situation whenever assistance is to be provided under the EGF; notes that increased synergies between EGF and ESI Funds are important in order to achieve faster and more effective results; underlines that the ESI Funds can act as follow-up measures in the EGF areas of support by stimulating investment, overall growth and job creation; underlines that EGF interventions should be directed to investments that contribute to growth, jobs, education, skills and workers' geographical mobility and should be coordinated with existing EU programmes with a view to helping people find employment and promoting entrepreneurship, especially in the regions and sectors already suffering from the adverse effects of globalisation or restructuring of the economy; emphasises that integrated approaches based on multi-fund programming should be preferred in order to tackle redundancies and unemployment in a sustainable manner, through an efficient allocation of resources and closer coordination and synergies, in particular between the ESF and the ERDF; believes strongly that an integrated multi-fund programming strategy would reduce the risk of relocation and create favourable conditions for a return of industrial production to the EU;
 4. Considers that the functioning of the EGF has been improved by the reforms to the regulation; notes that the improvements made have simplified procedures for Member State access to the EGF and that this should result in greater use being made of the fund by Member States; calls on the Commission to propose actions to remove any barriers relating to administrative capacity which has obstructed EGF participation; believes the EGF should not acquire a macroeconomic stabilisation function;
 5. Notes that the reduced appropriations earmarked for the EGF in the annual budget have been sufficient to provide the necessary assistance and support that is both vital and necessary for people who have lost their jobs; emphasises however that since 2014 the scope of the EGF has been expanded to include NEETs and the crisis criterion and in the event of a significant increase in applications or the addition of new prerogatives the appropriations may not be enough and would have to be increased to ensure the effective functioning of the EGF;

Thursday 15 September 2016

6. Stresses the relevance of strong social dialogue based on mutual trust and shared responsibility as the best instrument with which to seek consensual solutions and common outlooks when predicting, preventing and managing restructuring processes; highlights that this would help to prevent job losses and therefore EGF cases;
7. Observes the significant increase in the number of applications during the derogative period 2009 to 2011 which allowed for applications on the basis of the crisis-related criteria and that this scope was further expanded to permanently include the crisis criterion and self-employed individuals from 2014 to 2020; welcomes the extension of this derogation after 2013; notes that over half of the total number of projects between 2007-2014 were crisis related; further stresses that the adverse effects of the economic crisis are continuing in some Member States;
8. Notes that, between 2007 and 2014, 131 funding applications for a total amount of EUR 542,4 million were submitted by 20 Member States targeting 121 380 workers;
9. Notes that the Commission made improvements to the EGF database in which quantitative data on EGF cases is recorded for statistical purposes, making it easier for Member States to submit applications and for the Commission to analyse and compare figures on EGF cases; notes, furthermore, that the Commission included the EGF in the Shared Fund Management Common System, which should result in the submission of more correct and complete applications and a further reduction in the time it takes for an application submitted by a Member State; notes that this system allows for the simplification of applications for Member States and urges the Commission to speed up the processing of applications so that funding can be provided swiftly in order to maximise its impact;
10. Calls on the Commission to fully anticipate the effects of trade policy decisions on the EU labour market, also considering the evidence based information of these effects that have been highlighted by the EGF applications; calls on the Commission to conduct thorough ex-ante and ex-post impact assessments, including social impact assessments, involving potential effects on employment, competitiveness and the economy as well as the impact on small and medium sized enterprises while ensuring effective ex-ante coordination between DG Trade and DG Employment; calls on Parliament to organise regular joint hearings of the Committee on International Trade and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs in order to contribute to improving coordination between trade policy and the EGF and the monitoring thereof; considers it necessary to step-up the use of the EGF in dealing with relocation as well as sectorial crises caused by global demand fluctuations; firmly opposes any initiative to consider the EGF in its current form and with its current budget as an intervention tool for jobs lost in the European Union as a result of trade strategies decided at EU level, including future trade agreements or those already in place; highlights the need for strong coherence between trade and industrial policies and the need to modernise the EU's Trade Defence Instruments;
11. Calls on the Commission to only grant market economy status to trade partners when they meet the five criteria which it has set; calls, in this regard, on the Commission to establish a clear and effective strategy on issues related to the granting of market economy status to third countries in order to preserve the competitiveness of EU businesses and to continue the struggle to combat any form of unfair competition;
12. Highlights that one of the main aims of the EGF is to help workers who lose their jobs as a result of a serious shift in Union trade in goods or services as established in Article 2(a) of the Regulation; is of the opinion that an important task of the EGF is to ensure support for workers made redundant as a result of the negative consequences of trade disputes; consequently calls on the Commission to clarify that the loss of jobs as a consequence of trade disputes which result in a serious shift in Union trade in goods or services is fully within the scope of the EGF;
13. Emphasises that the EGF cannot under any circumstances act a substitute to a serious policy to prevent and pre-empt restructurings; stresses the importance of a true industrial policy at EU level to bring sustainable and inclusive growth;

Thursday 15 September 2016

14. Calls on the Commission to carry out sector-specific studies on the impact of globalisation and, on the basis of the findings, make proposals to encourage companies to anticipate changes in their industries and to prepare their workers before making them redundant;

15. Underlines that some Member States have preferred to use the ESF rather than the EGF because of higher ESF co-financing rates, swifter implementation of ESF measures, the lack of EGF pre-financing and the lengthy EGF approval procedure; believes however that the increased co-financing rate and the more timely application and approval process contained in the new regulation address some of these concerns; regrets that EGF support still has not reached redundant workers in all Member States and calls on the Member States to make use of this support in the event of mass redundancies;

16. Draws attention to the fact that according to the Court of Auditors' report the average length of an EGF application approval is 41 weeks; calls for no effort to be spared to accelerate procedures; welcomes efforts by the Commission to minimise delays and to streamline the application process; underlines that the strengthening of Member States' capacities is indispensable in this respect and strongly recommends that all Member States start implementing the measures as soon as possible; notes that many Member States already do so;

17. Notes that the EGF suffers from a serious lack of awareness on the part of some Member States, social partners and companies; calls on the Commission to step up its communications to the Member States, to national and local trade union networks and to the general public; calls on the Member States to promote awareness of the EGF to workers and their representatives and to do so in a timely manner in order to ensure that the maximum number of potential beneficiaries can be reached and gain from EGF measures and for more effective promotion of the benefits based on the results achieved by the EGF;

18. Recalls the importance of safeguards that prevent the relocation of enterprises benefiting from EU funding within a defined period of time which might lead to additional support schemes being initiated due to redundancies;

Beneficiaries of the EGF

19. Welcomes the conclusions in the Court of Auditors' report that nearly all EGF-eligible workers were able to benefit from personalised and well-coordinated measures tailored to their individual needs and that nearly 50 % of workers who received financial assistance are now back in employment; notes that a lack of timely and effective implementation of EGF programmes in some Member States has resulted in underspending; believes that the involvement of targeted beneficiaries or their representatives, the social partners, local employment agencies and other relevant stakeholders in the initial assessment and application is essential in order to ensure positive outcomes for beneficiaries; calls on the Commission to support the Member States in developing innovative measures and programmes and to assess in its reviews to what extent the design of the coordinated package of personalised services anticipated future labour market perspectives and required skills and was compatible with the shift towards a resource-efficient and sustainable economy; calls on the Member States, in line with Article 7 of the current regulation to make further efforts to design the co-ordinated package of personalised services towards a resource-efficient and sustainable economy; notes that innovation, smart specialisation and resource efficiency are key to industrial renewal and economic diversification;

20. Notes that out of the 73 projects analysed in the Commission's ex-post evaluation report, the average share of beneficiaries aged 55 or over was 15 % and of beneficiaries aged 15-24 was 5 %; welcomes therefore the emphasis in the new regulation on older and younger workers and the inclusion of NEETs in certain applications; notes that the average share of female beneficiaries was 33 % and that of males was 67 %; notes that these figures reflect the gender make-up of employees, which can vary depending on the sector involved; calls therefore on the Commission to ensure that in all EGF applications women and men are treated equally and calls on the Member States to collect data from a gender perspective to see how it affects female beneficiaries' re-employment rates; notes furthermore that in some EGF applications the number of targeted beneficiaries is low compared to the total number of eligible beneficiaries which can lead to a suboptimal impact;

Thursday 15 September 2016

21. Considers that the inclusion of NEETs in EGF applications often requires different types of interventions and believes that all appropriate actors including the social partners, local community groups and youth organisations should be represented at the implementation stage of each programme and they should promote the measures necessary to ensure the maximum participation of NEETs; in this context, encourages Member States to have a strong lead agency to coordinate the implementation of the programme, to ensure dedicated and sustained support to assist NEETs' completion of the programme and also to ensure maximum disbursement of programme funds; believes that an independent review with a specific focus on the issue of NEETs' participation would identify better practices; strongly believes that the derogation for the inclusion of NEETs should be continued to the end of the programming period in December 2020;

22. Calls on the Commission to include in its mid-term evaluation of the EGF a specific qualitative and quantitative assessment of the EGF support to young persons not in employment, education or training (NEETs), especially in view of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee and the necessary synergies between national budgets, the ESF and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI);

23. Notes that, according to the ex-post evaluation, the average beneficiary reach rate across all 73 cases examined was 78 %. This includes 20 cases with beneficiary reach rates of 100 % or more; insists however that the maximum reach rate for any case is 100 % and therefore the use of figures greater than 100 % skews the data to suggest a significantly higher reach rate than the actual one; notes that this is also the case of the budget implementation rate; calls on the Commission to adjust its figures to provide a more accurate assessment of beneficiary reach rates and budget implementation rates;

24. Welcomes the fact that many beneficiaries were, first and foremost, able to find a new job thanks to the personalised support of the EGF in their job search and saw their skills updated through training programmes and mobility allowances; also welcomes the fact that the EGF enabled some employees to become entrepreneurs via the provision of aid to start up or take over companies; stresses, therefore, the notable positive effects that the EGF is reported to have had on self-esteem, feelings of empowerment and motivation; underlines that EGF assistance has increased social cohesion by enabling people to re-enter employment and avoid negative unemployment traps;

25. Notes that according to the figures from the ex post report, EGF beneficiaries tend to have a relatively lower than average educational attainment, thus less transferrable skills, which, in normal circumstances reduces their employment opportunities and makes them more vulnerable on the labour market; takes the view that the EGF can deliver the best EU added value when supporting training and re-training schemes for workers that support especially lower-skilled vulnerable groups, that prioritise skills needed by the labour market and that enables entrepreneurship;

26. Notes that a survey carried out as part of the ex-post evaluation produced mixed results, with 35 % stating that the quality of new employment are better or far better, 24 % stating it was the same and 41 % stating it was worse or far worse; however, as there is no systematic data on which to base any assessment, recommends to the Commission to gather more detailed information about the impact of EGF interventions and their quality with a view, at a later stage, to taking corrective action as might prove necessary;

Cost effectiveness and added value of the EGF

27. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to use the scope for implementing the EGF budget more flexibly and effectively, with the focus on outcomes, impact and value added, and without compromising appropriate and transparent use of funds and compliance with the rules; is of the opinion that the application procedure should be made faster in order to make the fund more effective for workers made redundant; is concerned about the disparity between resources requested from the EGF and amounts reimbursed by Member States, with an average budget implementation rate of only 45 %; calls, therefore, on the Commission to assess thoroughly the reasons for the low implementation rates and to propose measures to address the existing bottlenecks and ensure optimal use of the fund; notes that the re-employment rate at the end of the EGF assistance varies considerably from 4 % to 86 % and underlines therefore the importance of active and

Thursday 15 September 2016

inclusive labour market measures; notes that EGF expenditure in some Member States consistently performs better than others; suggests that the Commission continues to provide guidance and enables Member States to share best practice in the application of EGF funds and their use in order to ensure the maximum re-employment rate per euro spent;

28. Is of the opinion that the co-funding rate of 60 % should not be increased;

29. Notes the fact that according to the Commission's ex-post evaluation on average just 6 % of EGF funds were spent on administrative and management costs;

30. Notes that the most significant aspect of cost effectiveness as identified in the stakeholder consultations was the number of re-employed workers who are now paying taxes and social security contributions instead of drawing on unemployment or other social benefits;

31. Notes that in a number of EGF cases higher costs for actions under Article 7(4) of the EGF Regulation weaken the overall impact of the EGF investment; calls on the Commission to tackle the issue of such costs by introducing limits;

32. Notes the proposal in the ex-post evaluation that a counterfactual impact evaluation is an important element in understanding the added value of the EGF; regrets that such an evaluation is not yet in place;

33. Welcomes the conclusion from the Court of Auditors that the EGF delivered genuine EU added value when used to co-finance services for redundant workers or allowances not ordinarily existing under Member States' unemployment benefit systems, thus fostering social cohesion in Europe; stresses that certain Member States lack social protection provisions sufficient to meet the needs of workers who have lost their jobs;

34. Regrets the fact that according to the Court of Auditors one third of EGF funding compensates national workers' income support schemes with no EU added value; points out that the new EGF regulation limits the costs of special measures, such as job search allowances and recruitment incentives for employers, to 35 % of the total cost of the coordinated package and that EGF backed initiatives are not a substitute for passive social protection measures by Member States under their national systems; insists that the EGF cannot be used to substitute for the obligations of enterprises to their workers; Furthermore, encourages the Commission to specify at the next revision of the Regulation that the EGF cannot be used to substitute for the obligations of Member States to the redundant workers;

35. Regrets the fact that budget implementation rates range from 3 % to 110 %, with an average implementation rate of 55 %; considers that this situation sometimes reflects deficiencies either at the planning or implementation phase and should be improved through better designed and better implemented projects;

36. Regrets the diminished funding for the EGF; calls on the Commission and Member states to additionally support the EGF to ensure that needs are met; calls on the Commission to ensure that there are sufficient staff in relation to the workload and to avoid unnecessary delays;

37. Is of the opinion that EGF and ESF measures should be used to complement each other in order to deliver both specific short-term and more general longer term solutions; notes the conclusion that generally Member States effectively co-ordinated the EGF with ESF and national labour market measures and that no instances of overlap or double funding of individuals was detected during the Court of Auditors audit;

38. Is satisfied with the finding from the Commission's report on the EGF's activities in 2013 and 2014 that there were no irregularities reported to the Commission under the EGF Regulations in 2013 and 2014, nor were any EGF-related irregularities closed in 2013 and 2014;

Thursday 15 September 2016

Impact on SMEs

39. Notes that SMEs account for 99 % of all EU enterprises and employ the vast majority of EU workers; in this context, expresses concern that the EGF has had a very limited impact on SMEs, despite the fact that it clearly provides scope for SMEs to be targeted subject to certain criteria; acknowledges the Commission's explanation that the affected workers of downstream suppliers have never been intentionally excluded but calls on the Commission to further reorient the EGF towards SMEs which are key players in the European economy by e.g. placing greater emphasis on the provision from article 8, point (d) on the need to identify the suppliers, downstream producers or sub-contractors of dismissing enterprises or by following up previous cases where the EGF has benefitted SMEs, social enterprises and cooperatives to promote best practice; stresses that greater account must be taken of proportionality between workers from SMEs and workers from large companies;

40. Believes that there should be more use of the derogation from the eligibility threshold, particularly to benefit SMEs; Stresses the importance of the arrangements laid down in Article 4(2) of the current regulation for SMEs since they enable sectors of the economy affected by the crisis or globalisation to be restructured at the regional level on a case by case basis; recognises the challenges faced by applications made under these provisions and calls on the Commission to facilitate Member States in addressing these challenges in order to make the EGF a working solution for redundant workers; furthermore calls on the Commission and Member States to take the 'Think Small First' principle into account in the planning and application stages;

41. Notes the concentration of applications in the manufacturing and construction sectors and in particular in the automotive and aviation industries, with aid mainly provided for large enterprises; calls on the Member States, and on regional authorities with exclusive powers, to proactively support redundant workers in SMEs, cooperatives and social enterprises using the flexibility provided for in Article 4(2) of the current regulation, in particular with regard to collective applications involving SMEs and for other facilities which promote more pronounced support and wider access for SMEs; also to inform SMEs of the opportunities available to them under the EGF; stresses that these cases assisting SMEs should be regarded as an added value of the EGF;

42. Is satisfied with the finding in the Commission's ex-post implementation report identifying a positive trend between resources used on promotion of entrepreneurship and the self-employment rate at the end of the measures; notes however that the average rate of self-employment in all EGF cases is low at 5 % and that measures should be utilised to encourage entrepreneurs such as start-up grants and other incentives; highlights the importance of lifelong learning, mentorship and peer to peer networks in this context; believes that there is further scope for improvement for the use of the EGF, alone or in conjunction with other funds such as the ESI, to support entrepreneurship and start-up activity but emphasises that entrepreneurship support should be based on sustainable business plans; calls on Member States to emphasise the inclusion of women and girls in entrepreneurship programmes;

43. Welcomes the efforts of several Member States to increase the use of measures supporting entrepreneurship and the social economy, in the form of start-up grants and measures aimed towards promoting entrepreneurship and social cooperatives and services for new entrepreneurs;

Data requirements

44. Believes that, in the context of a number of complicating factors such as potential data omissions, regional and national specificities, different macro- and micro-economic circumstances, small sample sizes and certain necessary assumptions, the Commission's methodological approach should be rigorous and transparent, taking measures to remedy the shortcomings that complicate such an approach;

45. Stresses that the Court of Auditors report concludes that some Member States have not set quantitative reintegration targets and that existing data is not adequate to assess the effectiveness of the measures in re-integrating workers into employment; acknowledges the Commission's statement that the EGF Regulation does not include quantitative reintegration objectives and that the various EGF measures can be assessed by other means; recommends therefore that the Member States set quantitative re-integration objectives and systematically differentiate between EGF, ESF and other

Thursday 15 September 2016

national measures specifically designed for workers affected by mass redundancies; further calls on the Commission to provide information on the type and quality of jobs found by people who have been re-integrated into the labour market and on the medium term trend as regards the rate of integration achieved through EGF interventions; the Member States should furthermore distinguish between the two main types of EGF measures, i.e. active labour market measures and income support paid to workers, as well as providing more detailed information on the measures accessed by individual participants in order to allow a more accurate cost-benefit analysis of different measures; calls also on the Commission to provide data regarding EGF requests not approved at Commission level and the reasons for this;

46. Reminds the Member States of their obligation to provide data on re-integration rates 12 months after the implementation of the measures to provide the necessary follow-up concerning the EGF's effects and efficiency;

47. Emphasises the need to streamline audit procedures at national level so as to ensure coherence and efficiency and to avoid unnecessary repetition between bodies operating different levels of control;

48. Recommends the strengthening of information flows and support arrangements between the National Contact Person and the regional or local case delivery partners;

49. Recommends that more regular peer reviews, cross-national exchanges or partnering of new EGF cases with previous EGF cases be implemented in order to exchange good practices and implementing experiences; recommends therefore to create a platform of best practices, which is easily accessible and supports better exchange of integrated solutions;

50. Notes the European Parliamentary Research Service's concerns as regards the methodology for calculating the benefits of the EGF; underlines the need for additional requirements on performance indicators;

51. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to maintain the provisions in the current EGF Regulation on allowances for Carers; in this context calls on the Member States to develop flexible working and training measures and where possible to locate these measures in local communities as many female redundant workers may have less geographical flexibility due to family care obligations;

52. Calls on regional and local competent authorities, social partners and civil society organisations to coordinate efforts among labour market actors so as to enable better access to EGF funding support in cases of future redundancies; calls, moreover, for closer participation by the social partners in the monitoring and evaluation activities of the Fund, and particularly for them to encourage representatives of women stakeholders so as to ensure more attention is paid to the gender aspects;

53. Calls on the Commission to consider delegating the evaluation of the EGF as required under Article 20 of the Regulation to Eurofound; believes that within such a proposal the Commission could provide Eurofound with the necessary financial resources, corresponding to current EGF evaluation procurement expenditure and human resource costs; moreover, as the main impediment to better evaluations is the lack of appropriate data, the Commission could require the Member States to provide the relevant data to Eurofound;

o

o o

54. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and to the governments and parliaments of the Member States.
