

Courtesy translation

Please find attached the Opinion of the European Union Affairs Committee of the Senate of the Republic of Poland on:

- proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2014-2020), COM(2011) 608.

OPINION

Pursuant to Article 75b para. 1, subpara. 1 of the Rules and Regulations of the Senate (Monitor Polski of 2010, No 39, item 542 and No 57, item 771, of 2011, No 6, item 62) the European Union Affairs Committee submits the following opinion on a draft legislative act of the European Union, adopted at the sitting on January 31, 2012:

1. The European Union Affairs Committee of the Senate of the Republic of Poland (EUAC) does not support **the draft Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2014 – 2020), (COM(2011)608)**.
2. In the opinion of EUAC, this draft leads to the duplication of instruments that already exist within the framework of the social policy. All the tasks that the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is supposed to fulfil may also be carried out under the European Social Fund (ESF) – an instrument which has been set up for similar purposes and which is more responsive and efficient than the EGF. Application for funding under the EGF is a very complicated and lengthy process, while the ESF instrument is simpler and can be deployed more quickly.
We would like to point out that duplication of instruments and dispersion of funds allocated for the same purpose is not consistent with the Commission's commitment to simplify the solutions adopted in the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework.
3. In our view, there are no clear and precise rules for granting support under the EGF, e.g. in the case of increasing co-funding to 65% or identifying sectors or regions eligible for support to farmers. In both cases, it is the Commission that takes arbitrary decisions without having set any clear criteria.
4. We are convinced that the proposal for the operation of the EGF in the years 2014 – 2020 should be preceded by an evaluation of the past performance of the Fund.
5. In our opinion, during the 2007-2013 EGF programming period, the process of refunding resources, which – in order to be mobilised quickly – had to be contributed by the Member State, was too long. There is nothing to indicate that resources will be refunded faster during the period of the said Regulation being in force.
6. EUAC believes that the draft Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2014 – 2020) is not consistent with the principle of subsidiarity.

The aim of the Regulation is to provide support to workers made redundant after their companies are liquidated due to the crisis or major structural changes triggered by the increasing globalisation of production. The Commission should prove that the above aim cannot be achieved by other means and that the Regulation provides the best option for achieving it.

The Commission has failed to present convincing evidence that support for redundant workers will be more effective under the EGF scheme, which is managed at the EU level

and not at the level of particular Member States. It conflicts with the basic principle of subsidiarity – taking decisions as closely as possible to the citizen. Member States are obviously better informed as to which groups of workers should receive aid and as such they should be responsible for providing support to workers made redundant as a result of the crisis or globalisation.

Moreover, the arguments presented by the Commission in the explanatory memorandum fail to convince us that the draft brings any added value as compared to other EU instruments, especially the European Social Fund. On the contrary, the application procedure under the EGF is more complicated and lengthy than the procedure for applying for funds from the European Social Fund, which are available at the level of a Member State or a region. The decisions of the European Commission are taken on an arbitrary basis, with no clear criteria having been set for the allocation of funds from the EGF.