



Report on the 28th Meeting of the Contact Persons of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers (EGF)

Brussels, 24 November 2022

This document provides a concise summary of the meeting. The presentations are available on the EGF website.

1. Introduction and welcome by Ms Fabienne Lévy – Head of Unit “EGF and Shared Management”, DG EMPL, and adoption of the agenda

2. Update on EGF since the last Contact Persons meeting

2.1 Final reports, closures and applications

The Commission did not receive any final reports since the last meeting on 14 June 2022. However, one case (Attica Publishing Services) was closed during this period.

One new application was submitted, following mass dismissal at TNT Express Worldwide in Belgium. The application targets 556 workers in the logistics sector. Deadline for the adoption by the Commission is 14 February 2023.

2.2 Updates on SFC

The Commission gave an update on the SFC2021 tool. One of the issues reported to the Commission is the difficulty with uploading and sending documents. SFC2021 requires that at least one document is identified as “MAIN” type. In case all documents are identified as “ANNEX”, SFC will block the upload of the application.

The EGF co-financing rate is set by default to the highest co-financing rate of ESF+ in the particular Member State, but the Member State can opt for a lower co-financing rate subject to the minimum of 60% set by the EGF regulation.

The Commission must acknowledge the receipt of an application within 10 working days. This is done through an automatically generated snapshot document in SFC. No additional notification is sent to the Member State.

Updated manual for EGF application is available at the SFC Support Portal.

3. The European Year of Skills – presentation from DG EMPL Unit B2 “Skills Agenda”

The Commission presented the key policy developments in adult learning and introduced the European Year of Skills 2023.

There is an increased policy attention to the skills agenda, with the objective of 60% of all adults to participate in training every year by 2030. To achieve this objective, large-scale Skills Partnerships have been set up with various types of stakeholders, such as multinational companies, SMEs, training providers, social partners, national and regional authorities etc., to provide up- and reskilling opportunities.

Other key elements of the skills agenda include individual learning accounts with training entitlements for all working-age adults based on their needs, and micro-credentials to provide more targeted and flexible, short-time training opportunities.

In her annual State of the Union speech, the Commission president announced 2023 as the European Year of Skills, to promote a mind-set of reskilling and upskilling, to address shortage of staff faced by the European companies, and to achieve the digital and green transition in a socially fair manner. Four key areas require special attention: 1. investing in professional education and upskilling, 2. strengthening the relevance of skills by close cooperation with the companies about their needs, 3. matching the companies' needs with people's aspirations, and 4. attracting people with the skills needed from third countries to EU.

The proposal on the European Year of Skills is available for feedback on the "Have your say" portal until 14 December 2022. Participants were also asked to spread the word and share updates on this initiative on social media.

4. Tour de table – 'Applications planned and the reasons for the low uptake of the EGF post 2021 in your country – discussion with MS'

The low number of EGF applications post 2021 has been a surprise to the Commission. Participants were invited to share their thoughts on the low uptake of the EGF in the current programming period.

The principal reason behind the low number of applications is the good situation on national labour markets, often with many unfilled vacancies. Jobs have been preserved thanks to the measures to maintain them, such as short-term work-schemes. Also, there is currently a lot of funding available to absorb from other EU programmes.

Furthermore, several countries are faced with administrative overload and have limited capacity to concentrate on the EGF.

Two applications are currently planned. In Belgium, the application will target 500 workers dismissed from Logistics Nivelles and additional 100 workers from its subcontractor. In Spain, the application will target dismissed workers in aluminium sector in the region of Galicia.

Ireland continues to monitor the situation on the labour market following dismissals in large tech companies - an important sector of Irish economy - and is ready to apply for the EGF support if the situation requires it.

5. Delegated and Implementing acts in the EGF

5.1 Delegated and Implementing acts in the EGF – update EMPL EGF

The Commission provided explanations on the delegated and implementing acts in the EGF regulation, and the differences between the procedures for adopting the two types of acts.

The implementing act on the beneficiary survey will be published for feedback in Q1/2023. After the feedback period, the draft act will be submitted for an opinion of the EGF advisory committee, through an online meeting during the first half of 2023. In this same meeting, the committee may be asked to give its opinion also on the implementing act concerning the irregularities.

5.2 Presentation from OLAF - Unit "Anti-Corruption, Anti-Fraud Strategy and Analysis"

OLAF delivered a presentation on the reporting of irregularities concerning EGF, and the related delegated and implementing acts currently under preparation.

The management and financial control of measures supported by the EGF is the responsibility of the Member States, which are to report irregularities, including fraud, to the Commission. The delegated and implementing regulations will bring EGF in line with the other Commission funds, where similar legislative acts have existed already before, while recognising the specificities of the EGF.

The subject of the delegated regulation is to provide criteria for determining the cases of irregularity to be reported and the data to be provided, whereas the implementing regulation will define the format to be used for reporting of irregularities.

Following the public feedback period, the draft delegated act will be consulted with the EGF contact persons, and the draft implementing act will be submitted for the opinion of the EGF advisory committee.

6. Member States' communication activities and planned events, Next EGF Contact Persons meeting and Networking Seminar, AOB and wrap-up of the meeting

The next EGF Contact Persons meeting will be held online in the first half of 2023, if needed. The next in-person meeting and Networking Seminar will possibly take place in the second half of next year, in Brussels.

The Commission encouraged Member States to include in their applications measures necessary for transition towards green and digital economy.