

European globalisation adjustment fund: a strong signal for an active social policy

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The economic crisis which is hitting employment hard within the EU requires a strong European response adapted to the diverse situations within Member States and the varying employment conditions concerned. With this in mind the European Parliament during its plenary session in Strasbourg tomorrow will review the European globalisation adjustment fund. Despite warnings by the European Parliament the eligibility criteria, in place since the creation of the EGF in 2006, have proven too rigid whilst social policies multiply throughout Europe and unemployment continues to increase.

"While lowering the threshold at which the fund can intervene when workers lose their jobs by 1000 to 500, and including the subcontractors in this calculation, and by raising from 50% to 65% the potential share of Community financing, the new eligibility criteria respond better to the situation on the ground and therefore the concerns of the people", noted Ona Jukneviene (Independent, Lithuania), ALDE co-shadow rapporteur during the debate. "The essence of this text is that it puts emphasis on re-training, re-integration of employees at the time they lose their jobs. We insisted in our various debates on this issue that the workers, thanks to training, and with assistance to create a company or an assessment of their competences can immediately benefit from this money in order to find work", she added.

Jean-Marie Beaupuy (MoDem, France) also co-shadow rapporteur for ALDE added "The creation of the European globalisation adjustment fund is the only substantial project taken by the Barroso Commission during its mandate in the social domain. In the current context, which is likely to last several months, its reinforcement is vital. With 500 million euro available, this fund, adding to action already taken at national and local level could help thousands of Europeans victims of the present crisis. This act of solidarity, supported by the European Union, is a strong signal on the eve of the European elections on June 7."