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PROPOSAL

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date of receipt:	11 February 2026
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
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Subject:	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/2025/007 BE/Casa

Delegations will find attached document COM(2026) 3 final.

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EUROPEAN
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Brussels, 6.2.2026
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2026/0038 (BUD)

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/2025/007 BE/Casa

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

1. The rules applicable to financial contributions from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers (EGF) are laid down in 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].
2. On 23 September 2025, Belgium submitted an application EGF/2025/007 BE/Casa for a financial contribution from the EGF, following displacements in Casa[2] in Belgium.
3. Following its assessment of this application, the Commission has concluded, in accordance with all applicable provisions of Regulation (EU) 2021/691, that the conditions for awarding a financial contribution from the EGF are met.

SUMMARY OF THE APPLICATION

EGF application	EGF/2025/007 BE/Casa
Member State	Belgium
Region(s) concerned (NUTS[3] level 2)	Province of Antwerp (BE21)
Date of submission of the application	23 September 2025
Date of acknowledgement of receipt of the application	23 September 2025
Date when the translation was available	22 October 2025
Date of request for additional information	5 November 2025
Deadline for provision of the additional information	27 November 2025
Deadline for the completion of the assessment	17 February 2026
Intervention criterion	Article 4(2), point (a), of Regulation (EU) 2021/691
Primary enterprise	Casa International NV
Number of enterprises concerned	2
Sector(s) of economic activity (NACE Revision 2 division)[4]	Division 47 (Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles) and Division 52 (Warehousing and support activities for transportation)

1 OJ L 153, 3.5.2021, p. 48.
2 The displacements took place in the two companies of the Casa consortium, Casa International and Casa Logistics.
3 Commission Delegated Regulation 2019/1755 of 8 August 2019 amending the Annexes to Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS). OJ L 270, 24.10.2019, p. 1–56.
4 OJ L 393, 30.12.2006, p. 1.

Reference period (four months):	6 March 2025 – 6 July 2025
Number of displacements during the reference period (*a*)	416
Total number of eligible beneficiaries	416
Total number of targeted beneficiaries	416
Budget for personalised services (EUR)	2 168 980
Budget for implementing EGF[5] (EUR)	86 000
Total budget (EUR)	2 254 980
EGF contribution (85 %) (EUR)	1 916 733

ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION

Procedure

4. Belgium submitted application EGF/2025/007 BE/Casa within 12 weeks of the date on which the intervention criteria set out in Article 4 (2), point (a) of Regulation (EU) 2021/691 were met, on 23 September 2025. The Commission acknowledged receipt of the application the same date. The Commission was in possession of the translation of the application on 22 October 2025 and requested additional information from Belgium on 5 November 2025. Such additional information was provided within 15 working days of the request. The deadline of 50 working days of the receipt of the complete application within which the Commission should finalise its assessment of the application's compliance with the conditions for providing a financial contribution expires on 17 February 2026.

Eligibility of the application

Enterprises and beneficiaries concerned

5. The application relates to 416 displaced workers whose activity has ceased in Casa. The enterprise operates in the economic sectors classified under the NACE Revision 2 division 47 (Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles) and 52 (Warehousing and support activities for transportation). The redundancies are located in the NUTS 2 region of Province of Antwerp (BE21).

Enterprises and number of displacements within the reference period	
Casa International NV (retail trade)	257
Casa Logistics NV (warehousing)	159
Total no. of enterprises: 2 **Total no. of displacements:**	**416**
Total no. of self-employed persons whose activity has ceased:	**0**
Total no. of eligible workers and self-employed persons:	**416**

Intervention criteria

6. Belgium submitted the application under the intervention criteria of Article 4(2), point (a) of Regulation (EU) 2021/691, which requires the cessation of activity of at least 200 displaced workers over a reference period of four months in an enterprise in

[5] In accordance with Article 7(5) of Regulation (EU) 2021/691.

a Member State, including workers displaced in suppliers and downstream producers and / or self-employed persons whose activity has ceased.

7. The reference period of four months for the application runs from 6 March 2025 to 6 July 2025.

8. The cessation of activity during the reference period occurred as follows:

– 257 displaced workers in Casa International,

– 159 displaced workers in Casa Logistics.

Calculation of displacements and of cessation of activity

9. Pursuant to Article 6, first paragraph, point (a), in conjunction with Article 5, first paragraph, point (c), of Regulation (EU) 2021/691, the cessation of activities of the displaced workers during the reference period has been calculated from the date of the de facto termination of the contract of employment or its expiry.

Eligible beneficiaries

10. The total number of eligible beneficiaries is 416.

Description of the events that led to the displacements and cessation of activity

11. Casa comprises two companies: Casa International with 65 retail outlets throughout Belgium, and Casa Logistics responsible for storage and distribution to these outlets.

12. The displacements are the result of the financial difficulties that Casa has been facing for several years, partly because of the strongly increased role of e-commerce. International competition has also intensified, resulting in creditor protection being sought in 2020. Casa was sold to Globitas in 2021 and re-sold to the Swedish company AAS Retail in 2024.

13. Casa then got into financial difficulties again due to an acute shortage of liquidity, resulting in clearance sales in shops in the summer of 2024 and the loss of various jobs in the marketing department at the headquarters in Olen. At the end of October 2024, Casa again applied to the Commercial Court for six months of creditor protection, for the purposes of a possible restart.

14. There were no serious potential purchasers of the company, and Casa International and Casa Logistics were declared bankrupt by the Antwerp Commercial Court on 6 March 2025, resulting in 416 workers losing their jobs.

Expected impact of the displacements as regards the local, regional or national economy and employment

15. In 2024, more than 11 000 companies went bankrupt in Belgium, an increase of 8% on 2023 and the highest number since 2013[6]. In Flanders alone, more than 6 000 businesses were declared bankrupt. The number of jobs lost due to bankruptcies in 2024 was estimated at a total of 29 245, of which 60% in Flanders. In the first half of 2025, again more than 15 000 jobs were lost due to bankruptcies in Belgium, 51% of them in Flanders[7].

16. Casa's 63 shops are spread across Flanders and Brussels, but both the headquarters and the distribution centre are located in Olen (Province of Antwerp). About half of

[6] Source: Statbel (bankruptcies in 2024)

[7] Source: Statbel (Bankruptcies and job losses in Belgium by month)

the affected employees are around Belgium and the other half concentrated in the distribution centre and head office. As a result of this concentration, employment in the Olen region has been hit particularly hard.

17. In the Neteland region, of which Olen is part, the number of job vacancies reported to the public employment services has fallen by 11% over the period June 2024 to May 2025 compared with the previous 12 months, and the number of jobseekers has increased by 7% in August 2025 compared with April 2024.

18. The workers who have lost their jobs are mainly sales assistants and warehouse staff. Despite the number of vacancies for direct employment in the retail sector (including wholesale) falling in Flanders in recent years[8], there is still shortage of labour in retail[9]. Therefore, most affected sales assistants have a good chance of finding work.

19. Finding a new job will be more challenging for the many warehouse staff affected in the distribution centre. There are many jobseekers looking for this type of work. And although there is demand for warehouse workers, many of the jobseekers do not have the right skills or qualifications (e.g. lift truck, reach truck) and will need either upskilling and/or to work in another region or switching to a different occupation.

Application of the EU Quality Framework for anticipation of change and restructuring (QFR)

20. Belgium has described how the recommendations set out in the EU Quality Framework for anticipation of change and restructuring have been taken into account. The national labour law[10] on the active management of restructuring requires enterprises undergoing restructuring to set up an employment unit, to provide outplacement services to the workers laid off in the context of collective redundancies. In the event of bankruptcy, however, this legal obligation does not apply. Instead, a safety net is provided for in Flanders[11], which involves the State financing the outplacement pathway described below in paragraph 26, replacing the counseling and outplacement services that these displaced workers do not receive.

21. Regarding the activities undertaken to assist the displaced workers, Belgium has reported that several information sessions were organised shortly after the bankruptcy, between 28 March and 4 April 2025. Outplacement services started in early April and a job fair was organised on 17 June 2025 in Westerlo.

Complementarity with actions funded by national or Union funds

22. Belgium has confirmed that the measures described below receiving a financial contribution from the EGF will not also receive financial contributions from other Union financial instruments.

23. The coordinated package of personalised services complements actions funded by other national or EU funds.

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8 From June 2023 to May 2024, the number of vacancies fell by 11.4% compared with the previous 12 months (source: VDAB).

9 Between June 2024 and May 2025, more than 7 400 vacancies were notified directly to VDAB across Flanders.

10 The Royal Decree of 10 November 2006 amending the Royal Decree of 9 March 2006.

11 Flemish Government Decree of 18 March 2011 implementing Article 5(1)(2)(e) of the Decree of 7 May 2004 establishing the external independent agency of the Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Service (VDAB) under public law.

Procedures for consulting the targeted beneficiaries or their representatives or the social partners as well as local and regional authorities

24. Belgium has indicated that the co-ordinated package of personalised services has been drawn up in consultation with experts and social partners, in compliance with Article 7(4) of Regulation (EU) 2021/691. The final package of measures was presented to the trade unions ABVV[12] and ACV[13] on 2 July 2025.

Targeted beneficiaries and proposed measures

Targeted beneficiaries

25. All 416 displaced workers are expected to participate in the measures. Pursuant to Article 8(7), point (f), of Regulation (EU) 2021/691, the provided breakdown of these workers by gender, age group and educational level is as follows:

Category		Number of expected beneficiaries	
Gender:	Men:	135	(32,5 %)
	Women:	281	(67,5 %)
	Non-binary	0	(0,0 %)
Age group:	Below 30 years:	61	(14,7 %)
	30-54 years:	234	(56,3 %)
	Over 54 years:	121	(29,1 %)
Educational level	Lower secondary education or less[14]	95	(22,8 %)
	Upper secondary[15] or post-secondary education[16]	245	(58,9 %)
	Tertiary education[17]	76	(18,3 %)

Proposed measures

26. Pursuant to Article 8(7), point (h) of Regulation (EU) 2021/691, the personalised coordinated package to be provided to displaced workers consists of the following measures:

– Taskforce: A taskforce composed of experts with experience in providing guidance on collective redundancy processes and in-depth knowledge of the local labour market, will organise and run the information sessions, define personalised paths together with the workers for reintegration into employment and re-adjust them, if need be.

12 Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond - General Labour Federation of Belgium
13 Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond - Confederation of Christian Trade Unions
14 ISCED 0-2
15 ISCED 3
16 ISCED 4
17 ISCED 5-8

– Outplacement: Outplacement services include both collective and individual activities, such as an initial interview and individual guidance, certification of acquired skills, guidance on using the VDAB's (Public Employment Services in Flanders) "My Career" (*Mijn Loopbaan)* digital platform for job searching, as well as guidance before, during, and after the job fair. Support is also provided in ”Job-Up” sessions, where workers can walk in to receive help with questions on their job application.

– Active mediation: The VDAB mediators estimate the jobseekers’ potential, guide them, try to match them with suitable employers, and refer them to upskilling measures, if necessary. Support is also given on preparing the workers for future job applications, writing attractive CVs and acquiring skills needed for performing confidently in a job interview.

– Guidance: VDAB can refer a job seeker to a partner organisation when this is deemed useful based on the person’s needs, profile and stage in their career path. Each organisation offers a personalised programme, which includes guidance, search for job openings, assessment and strengthening of digital skills, help in using digital tools for job search, and mental support. These services are provided through a voucher scheme to ensure freedom of choice for the workers.

– Training and retraining: Workers have access to a wide range of training, provided by VDAB or by external training providers. They can choose either to further develop their skills in their own field, or to fully retrain in occupations with labour shortage. Prior to the training programme, a VDAB mediator carries out individual screening to tailor the learning pathway to each participant’s motivation, skills and personal growth opportunities. The level of digital skills training is adapted to the jobseeker’s job target. Specific emphasis is placed on strengthening participants’ technical and digital skills via hybrid learning methodologies – a mix of classroom, digital and experience-based learning. Successful participants will receive an official certificate or diploma.

– Training at the workplace: Workers receive individual on-the-job training at the enterprise that is required to recruit them after the training. The employment contract is either permanent or fixed term for at least the same duration as the training.

– Job fair: This recruitment event brings together jobseekers and employers. Before attending the event, participants are offered mentoring to prepare meeting with potential employers. The event also contributes to getting to know the companies, building confidence to engage in conversations and encouraging to follow training based on information provided by the employers.

27. The ICT training and additional support foreseen within the guidance and outplacement measures caters for the dissemination of the skills required in the digital industrial age and in a resource-efficient economy, as required by Article 7(2) of Regulation (EU) 2021/691.

28. The proposed actions, here described, constitute active labour market policy measures within the eligible actions set out in Article 7 of Regulation (EU) 2021/691. These actions do not substitute passive social protection measures.

29. Belgium has provided the required information on measures that are mandatory for the enterprise concerned by virtue of national law or pursuant to collective agreements. In accordance with Article 9(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/691, Belgium has confirmed that a financial contribution from the EGF will not replace such measures.

Estimated budget

The estimated total costs are EUR 2 254 980, comprising expenditure for personalised services of EUR 2 168 980 and expenditure for preparatory, management, information and publicity, control and reporting activities of EUR 86 000.

30. The total financial contribution requested from the EGF is EUR 1 916 733 (85 % of total costs).

31. Pursuant to Article 8(7), point (m), of Regulation (EU) 2021/691, Belgium has specified that the national pre-financing and co-funding is provided by VDAB.

Measures	Estimated number of participants	Estimated cost per participant *(EUR)*[18]	Estimated total costs *(EUR)*[19]
Personalised services (measures under Article 7(2), second subparagraph, point (a), of Regulation (EU) 2021/691)			
Taskforce	416	956	397 500
Outplacement	222	2 290	508 300
Active mediation *(Actieve bemiddeling)*	168	1 813	304 500
Guidance *(Begeleiding door partners)*	50	4 500	225 000
Training and retraining (*Opleiding eigen beheer, opleiding SIF, opleiding bij partners)*	89	8 118	722 500
Training at the workplace *(Opleidingen in onderneming (IBO))*	8	960	7 680
Job fair *(Jobbeurs)*	96	36	3 500
Sub-total (a):	–		2 168 980

[18] To avoid decimals, the estimated costs per worker have been rounded. However, the rounding has no impact on the total cost of each measure, which remains as in the application submitted by Belgium.

[19] Totals do not tally due to rounding.

Percentage of the package of personalised services		(96,19 %)
Activities under Article 7(5) of Regulation (EU) 2021/691		
1. Preparatory activities	–	2 500
2. Management	–	35 000
3. Information and publicity	–	3 500
4. Control and reporting	–	45 000
Sub-total (b): Percentage of the total costs:	–	86 000 (3,81 %)
Total costs (a + b):	–	2 254 980
EGF contribution (85 % of total costs)	–	1 916 733

Period of eligibility of expenditure

32. Belgium started providing the personalised services to the targeted beneficiaries on 14 March 2025. The expenditure on the measures will therefore be eligible for a financial contribution from the EGF from 14 March 2025 until 24 months after the date of the entry into force of the Financing Decision.

33. Belgium started incurring the administrative expenditure to implement the EGF on 6 March 2025. The expenditure for preparatory, management, information and publicity, control and reporting activities shall therefore be eligible for a financial contribution from the EGF from 6 March 2025 until 31 months after the date of the entry into force of the Financing Decision.

Management and control systems

34. The application contains a description of the management and control system required under Article 23 of Regulation (EU) 2021/691, which specifies the responsibilities of the bodies involved. Belgium has notified the Commission that the financial contribution will be managed by VDAB. The payments will be made by VDAB's financial service. The Department of Finance and Budget - Audit Unit of the Flemish Audit Authority for the European Structural Funds is the audit authority for the EGF.

Commitments provided by the Member State concerned

35. Belgium has provided all necessary assurances regarding the following:

- the principles of equality of treatment and non-discrimination will be respected in access to the proposed measures and their implementation,
- the requirements laid down in national and EU legislation concerning collective redundancies have been complied with,
- any double financing will be prevented,
- the financial contribution from the EGF will comply with the procedural and material Union rules on State aid.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION

Budgetary proposal

36. The EGF shall not exceed a maximum annual amount of EUR 30 million (in 2018 prices), as laid down in Article 8 of Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027[20] amended by Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/765 of 29 February 2024[21].

37. Having examined the application in respect of the conditions set out in Article 13(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) 2021/691, and having taken into account the number of targeted beneficiaries, the proposed measures and the estimated costs, the Commission proposes to mobilise the EGF for the amount of EUR 1 916 733, representing 85 % of the total costs of the proposed measures, in order to provide a financial contribution for the application.

38. The proposed decision to mobilise the EGF will be taken jointly by the European Parliament and the Council pursuant to Article 15(1), first subparagraph, second sentence, of Regulation (EU) 2021/691 and, as laid down in point 9 of 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 management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources[22].

Related acts

39. At the same time as it presents this proposal for a decision to mobilise the EGF, the Commission will present to the European Parliament and to the Council a proposal to transfer to the relevant budgetary line the amount of EUR 1 916 733.

40. At the same time as it adopted this proposal for a decision to mobilise the EGF, the Commission adopted a decision on a financial contribution that constitutes a financing decision within the meaning of Article 110 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509[23]. That financing decision will enter into force on the date on which the Commission is notified of the approval of the budgetary transfer by the European Parliament and the Council pursuant to Article 15(2), first subparagraph, of Regulation (EU) 2021/691.

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[20] OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 11.

[21] OJ L, 2024/765, 29.2.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/765/oj.

[22] OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 28.

[23] Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast), OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj.

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THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

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[24], and in particular Article 15(1), first subparagraph, 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 management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources[25], and in particular point 9 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

(1) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers (EGF) aims to demonstrate solidarity and promote decent and sustainable employment in the Union by providing support for workers made redundant and self-employed persons whose activity has ceased in the case of major restructuring events and assisting them in returning to decent and sustainable employment as soon as possible.

(2) The EGF is not to exceed a maximum annual amount of EUR 30 million (in 2018 prices), as laid down in Article 8 of Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093[26] amended by Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/765[27], and Article 16 of Regulation (EU) 2021/691.

(3) On 23 September 2025, Belgium submitted an application to mobilise the EGF in accordance with Article 8(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/691, in respect of workers' displacements in Casa in Belgium. It was supplemented by additional information provided in accordance with Article 8(5) of Regulation (EU) 2021/691. That application is considered to comply with the conditions for providing a financial contribution from the EGF as laid down in Article 13 of Regulation (EU) 2021/691, on the basis of the assessment made by the Commission in the Proposal for a mobilisation decision of the European Parliament and of the Council[28].

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[24] OJ L 153, 3.5.2021, p. 48.

[25] OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 28.

[26] Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027 (OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 11).

[27] OJ L, 2024/765, 29.2.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/765/oj.

[28] COM (2026) 3

(4) The EGF should, therefore, be mobilised in order to provide a financial contribution of EUR 1 916 733 in respect of the application submitted by Belgium.

(5) In order to minimise the time taken to mobilise the EGF, this Decision should apply from the date of its adoption,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

For the general budget of the Union for the financial year 2026, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers shall be mobilised to provide the amount of EUR 1 916 733 in commitment and payment appropriations.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the day of its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union. It shall apply from [*the date of its adoption*][*].

Done at Brussels,

For the European Parliament
The President

For the Council
The President

[*] Date to be inserted by the Parliament before the publication in OJ.