
EU job seeker's aid worth €2.8m for 421 dismissed workers in Belgium

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- Support for 421 former workers of the retail chain Makro Cash & Carry, in Wallonia region
 - Makro was declared bankrupt in January 2023
 - Support package includes advisory services, job search assistance, and skills training
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421 employees who lost their jobs at the retail chain Makro Cash & Carry following the company's bankruptcy will receive €2.8 million in EU aid.

On Wednesday, Parliament approved Belgium's request for support from the [European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers](#) (EGF). MEPs acknowledged that "the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine have reduced economic competitiveness and have a negative impact on economic growth in Belgium".

In recent years, Makro Cash & Carry Belgium NV faced financial losses and sales dropped further during the pandemic. The company was declared bankrupt in January 2023, resulting in 1,431 jobs lost in Belgium. 421 workers in Wallonia will benefit from the EGF aid, while the regional authorities in Flanders do not see a need for an EGF top-up of the support available to former Makro workers there. Unemployment in Wallonia (8.8%) is higher than in Flanders (3.1%), according to [Statbel](#).

The total estimated cost of these measures is €3.2 million, with 85% (€2.8 million) covered by the EGF and the remaining 15% (€499,000) financed by the Walloon region.

The EGF support package includes advisory services, job search assistance, and skills training in vocational, digital or language skills. In addition, the dismissed workers can receive guidance on starting their own business and benefit from start-up grants of up to €15,000. Additional

allowances are available for dismissed workers participating in job-search, training and education activities, as well as support for self-employed people in the initial months of launching a business.

The [report](#) by rapporteur [Petri Sarvamaa](#) (EPP, FI) was passed by 598 votes, 28 against and 4 abstentions.

Background

Under the [EGF regulation 2021-2027](#), the Fund supports displaced workers and self-employed people who have lost their activity. EGF support is available for people affected by all types of unexpected major restructuring events, including the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's unjustified invasion of Ukraine, as well as larger economic trends like decarbonisation and automation. Member states can apply for EU funding when at least 200 workers lose their jobs within a specific reference period.

Overall, since 2007, the EGF has made available €688 million in 177 cases, offering help to almost 168,000 people in 20 member states. EGF-supported measures add to national active labour market measures.

Further information

[Committee on Budgets](#)

The final text will be available under this link ([click on 22.11.2023](#))

[Procedure file](#)


[EGF website](#)


[Commission proposal](#)

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