

# A cooperative manifesto



Cooperative policy  
priorities for  
2014 European  
Parliament elections

# Cooperatives in Europe

Cooperatives create a diverse European economy, contribute to business start-ups and growth, and generate jobs and wealth.

Cooperatives are businesses owned and run by their members. Whether the members are employees, customers or local communities, they are everyday people who have an equal say in what their business does and a share in the profits.

Cooperatives come in all shapes and sizes, from micro enterprises to multinationals. They operate in all parts of the economy: from healthcare to housing, farms to pharmacies, supermarkets to sports clubs, banks to bakeries, energy to education.





# We want to work with you

Cooperatives Europe represents 160,000 businesses across Europe. Between them, Europe's cooperatives employ 5.4 million people and have 123 million members, meaning they are owned by one in five Europeans.

With such a large constituency, Cooperatives Europe is an active member of the European Parliament Social Economy Intergroup. In 2013 the EU Parliament adopted a report recognising the positive role of cooperatives through the economic crisis.

Cooperatives Europe wants to build on this and work with MEPs to develop effective measures to strengthen Europe's economy.

# Our vision of Europe

- A Europe that focuses on a real economy, serving people's needs and aspirations rather than financial markets.
- A Europe with a resilient and innovative economy that allows a diverse range of business models to flourish.
- A Europe in which young people are equipped to realise their entrepreneurial aspirations.
- A Europe with an environment that supports the start-up and growth of people-centered businesses.









# Policy priorities

Following consultation with cooperatives across Europe, Cooperatives Europe would like to work with MEPs to develop three concrete measures.

Together these measures can deliver important policy objectives: a more resilient economy, youth employment and business start-ups and growth.

## 1 A supportive EU policy framework for cooperatives

To create a resilient and diverse economy, the European Union and its member states need a regulatory environment that allows different business forms to develop on a level playing field.

As distinct member-owned rather than investor-owned businesses, legislation makes it harder for cooperative businesses to raise capital and for people to start and run a cooperative.

Cooperatives Europe would like to work with MEPs to revise the EU's 'one-size-fits-all' approach and develop measures that will make it as easy to start, run and grow a cooperative as any other business.

## 2 Increase cooperative awareness amongst younger people

With younger people increasingly interested in socially responsible business, youth employment in Europe would benefit if younger people's knowledge of cooperatives and other innovative business models was developed.

The teaching of entrepreneurship in schools, colleges and universities across member states is, however, focused on conventional business models.

Cooperatives Europe would like to work with MEPs to put in place policies that encourage educational institutions in member states to include the cooperative model in their curricula.

## 3 A cooperative roadmap to support business start-ups and growth

To create an environment in which people can start and grow different forms of business, entrepreneurs require appropriate education, finance and business support.

The European Commission last year established a permanent cooperative working group. Working with the Commission, the group is developing a 'cooperative roadmap', to be presented in 2014, to support cooperative start-ups and growth.

Cooperatives Europe would like MEPs to support the cooperative roadmap and assist in its implementation in the forthcoming legislative period.



## Talk to Cooperatives Europe

Cooperatives Europe is keen to discuss with candidates to the European Parliament how our suggested measures to strengthen Europe's economy can be developed and implemented.

Candidates can contact and talk to Cooperatives Europe's Director directly on the details below:

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Photography *Ceux qui aiment les lundis, Travailler en Scop*  
Jean-Robert Dantou / CG Scop / Picturetank

## Cooperatives Europe

Cooperatives Europe is the voice of cooperative enterprises in Europe.

Representing 90 member organisations from 35 European countries, we advocate for a level playing field between cooperatives and other forms of enterprise.

We work to increase the knowledge of the cooperative business model across Europe and to facilitate the development of cooperative enterprises.

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