



A cooperative year
in review



Annual report

June 2019 - May 2020



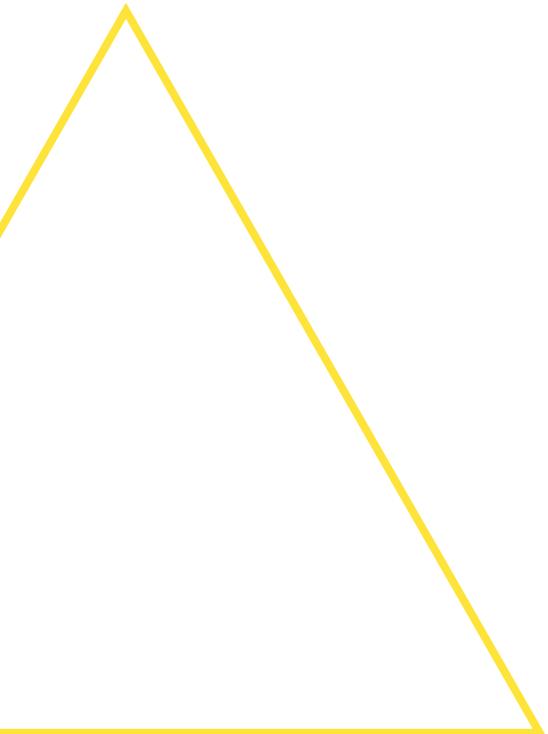
President

Jean-Louis Bancel

Director

Agnes Mathis





A movement of 'people first'

Sustainability, development and the notion of putting people first – the core beliefs of cooperative enterprises – have been the key priorities of the European Union over the last year. These values have been reinforced during the recent COVID-19 crisis, highlighting the endurance and the community centred response of the cooperative movement.

Our activities over the past year have placed cooperatives as key actors within these priorities, bringing their own specificities to the table. From contributing to the drafting of key EU policies on SME strategy, supporting Social Economy actions, to developing new contacts with universities and researchers, it is thanks to the close work with our members, staff, partners and the EU partnership (#coops4dev) that allows us to drive cooperation into the limelight.

It is through cooperation that we develop and consolidate actions boosting youth's involvement in the cooperative movement, or innovative solutions within the new forms of economy.

The COVID-19 crisis revealed an outburst of cooperative solidarity, but also opened the door to unexpected challenges for the future. Though events and actions had to be postponed or cancelled, several new initiatives (including position papers, surveys and member action promotion) were launched to anchor the cooperative movement as a key actor for the COVID-19 recovery.

It will be a common objective, and, in that context, we are all convinced that cooperative values are the first anchoring elements to be attached to.

President
Jean-Louis Bancel

Director
Agnes Mathis



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A cooperative influence in the EU

Cooperatives Europe has built links with the new European Parliament and European Commission, allowing to raise awareness about cooperatives, create new synergies and contribute to the external policies of the EU. Following closely President Von der Leyen's Commission's priorities, guidelines and activities ensures that cooperatives find their space in key EU policies and developments.

Renewed EU relations for future success

The cooperative campaign during the 2019 European elections resulted in a network of #CoopSupporters made up of Members of the European Parliament. During the nomination process of the new Commissioners of the European Commission, we invited our #CoopSupporter network to ask questions

to the Commissioner-candidates regarding issues important to cooperatives in Europe and beyond.

Relations with the new Commission were subsequently built up during meetings with various Commissioners based on common topics of interest, including international development (Commissioner Urpilainen), gender equality (Commissioner Dailli) and youth, research, and education policy (Commissioner Gabriel).

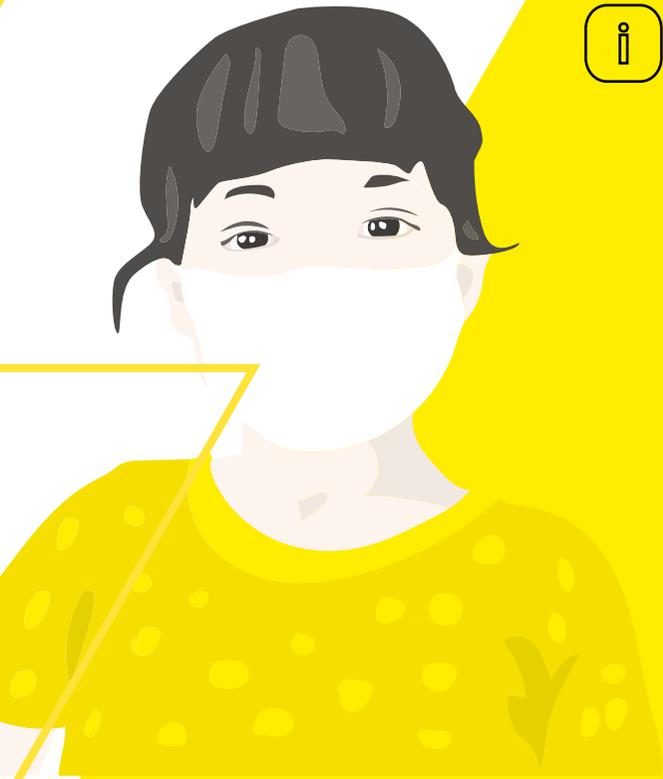
A European Green Deal that puts #PeopleFirst

The [European Green Deal](#) was presented by the new European Commission as the roadmap towards a sustainable green transition, beneficial for all.

Cooperatives Europe supports the strong link to the citizens and the focus on long-term sustainability which mirrors cooperatives' core mission of bringing social, economic and environmental aspects closer together. The Green Deal is an opportunity to support innovation and community participation in this field while putting people first.



A network of cooperation in light of crisis



The COVID-19 crisis has changed the daily lives of millions of citizens across the world. Cooperatives, as many other businesses, saw a strong impact on their activities, but also put themselves forward as anchors of their local communities. From transforming their daily work to support the health sector and ensuring food production for populations, to banding together to support communities and people in need, the upholding of the cooperative values and principles have truly shone the light on the cooperative difference.

Cooperatives in action across Europe

Cooperatives Europe proposed itself as a hub for our members to share the situation in each country as well as the initiatives and measures being taken by cooperatives to best support people in need during this difficult time. The showcase of actions by country is [available on our website](#).

Ensuring a sustainable recovery

Following a consultation with the members, a [position paper](#) was published with cooperative needs and concrete recommendations to the EU supporting two kinds of actions: persisting during the pandemic and preparing recovery actions, ensuring a sustainable economic and social future for European citizens.

A more detailed survey was also conducted among members and cooperative enterprises to best estimate the economic and social impact of the crisis on cooperatives. The results of the survey feed into our policy actions towards the European Commission to advocate for specific measures for cooperative enterprises in the European region (including neighbourhood countries).

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Entrepreneurship

Ensuring a level playing field for cooperative enterprises in all sectors remains a top priority for Cooperatives Europe. Not only do we advocate at the EU level within a range of entrepreneurship policies, from education and finance to new forms of economy, but we also ensure that the policies go beyond the start-up phase and ensure scale-up. Our work raised the cooperative profile in EU's Industrial Strategy, one of the key objectives in the Commission's programme. Such approach ensures fairness and transparency for all enterprises.



Key actions

- Demonstrated the cooperative distinctiveness to the European Commission on the topics of SME Strategy and the European Green Deal via Small Business Act (SBA) follow-up meetings.
- Presented and promoted Cooperatives Europe's strategy paper '[Cooperative future for Europe](#)' within the SME Envoy's working group.
- Liaised with other business organisations during the drafting of the EU Industrial Strategy Package to voice the importance of cooperatives, particularly on the SME strategy. Cooperatives Europe's [position paper](#) called for concrete implementation of measures and actions in every EU Member State that would secure access to skills, integration of digital innovation, and removal of regulatory and practical obstacles to doing business and scaling up.

A stylized illustration of a man with dark skin, short black hair, and round glasses. He is wearing a white collared shirt. The illustration is positioned on the left side of the page, partially overlapping a large yellow circular graphic element.

SME Envoy

A network chaired by the European Commission composed of national SME envoys (nominated by each EU Member State) and SME representatives.

Small Business Act follow-up

Informal group on business development of SMEs chaired by the Head of Unit of Entrepreneurship & SMEs at the European Commission.



Cooperatives Europe was selected as a jury of the [European Enterprise Promotion Awards](#) (EEPA) which promotes entrepreneurship and small businesses at local, regional and national levels. The event was part of the European [SME Assembly](#) event gathering 600 entrepreneurs, stakeholders and public authorities. Director Agnes Mathis introduced the winner of the “Responsible and Inclusive Entrepreneurship’ category, while Belgian cooperative ‘Haven Port Incubator’ won the ‘promoting entrepreneurship’ category.

European Enterprise Promotion Awards

3.1 Cooperatives for the next generation

Cooperatives Europe supports the mainstreaming of the cooperative model particularly as an opportunity for young entrepreneurs to develop their projects in a democratic and collective way. We not only provide practical support to those already interested in cooperative entrepreneurship, but also collaborate with youth organisations and education institutions to reach a young audience that lacks knowledge regarding this business model. The development of training and educational resources plays a central role in our strategy.



Supporting cooperative start-ups and effective mentorship



EU action – CoopStarter 2.0

[CoopStarter 2.0](#) is an Erasmus + project coordinated by Cooperatives Europe, aiming to mobilise the youth around cooperative entrepreneurship by bridging the knowledge and tool gap between youth organisations and cooperative associations through mentorship. This year the young ambassadors have begun to pitch and develop their cooperative start-up ideas within their communities in 5 countries.

CoopStarter methodology has been developed by the partners of the project as an open resource and is already adopted in two other initiatives: the Global Cooperative Entrepreneurs Programme (GCE) and the Swiss CoopStarter resulting in a wider and stronger network of Mentors and Ambassadors that are now present worldwide.

Global action – Global Cooperative Entrepreneurs

Inspired by the project and methodology of CoopStarter 2.0, the mentoring programme [Global Cooperative Entrepreneurs](#) (GCE) makes cooperative mentorship for start-ups a reality for youth across the globe. Implemented under the ICA-EU Partnership #coops4dev, together, the ICA regions, mentors and young ambassadors from all regions, including from two European countries not present in the CoopStarter 2.0 project (Sweden and Poland), have been trained to take their cooperative enterprises off the ground and will now be supported in pitching and developing their projects in their communities, mobilising other youth around their start-up ideas.

A global network of cooperative mentorship

- CoopStarter 2.0 project and the GCE programme formed an active global network of cooperative mentors who are able to exchange and improve their knowledge on supporting young entrepreneurs.
- Mentors of both projects contribute to the 'collaborative library' knowledge base, sharing materials, including publications, videos and research on cooperative entrepreneurship.
- Young ambassadors took part in the #coops4dev [Global Youth Forum on Cooperative Entrepreneurship 2020](#) (GYF20), gaining new knowledge and motivation (see chapter 5).

Knowledge Base: indexing cooperative resources

Cooperatives Europe, in the framework of the ICA-EU Partnership #coops4dev, has developed an innovative open-source 'Knowledge Base' technology, which is a collaborative search engine listing resources on cooperative entrepreneurship. The idea emerged via the CoopStarter 2.0 project and was upscaled via the Global Cooperative Entrepreneurs (GCE) programme.

It aims to give young entrepreneurs worldwide the support and tools they need to set up cooperative businesses, and to provide learning to students and actors interested in the cooperative business model. It allows them to find various types of materials, in a variety of languages, based on their topics of interest.

It is the first software of its kind specifically built by cooperators, for cooperators, worldwide. It mobilises a growing community around cooperation and entrepreneurship,

and is a unique opportunity for the cooperative movement worldwide to capitalise on its 5th Principle and foster cooperation with key actors like universities, training centres, local authorities and civil society organisations interested in cooperatives.

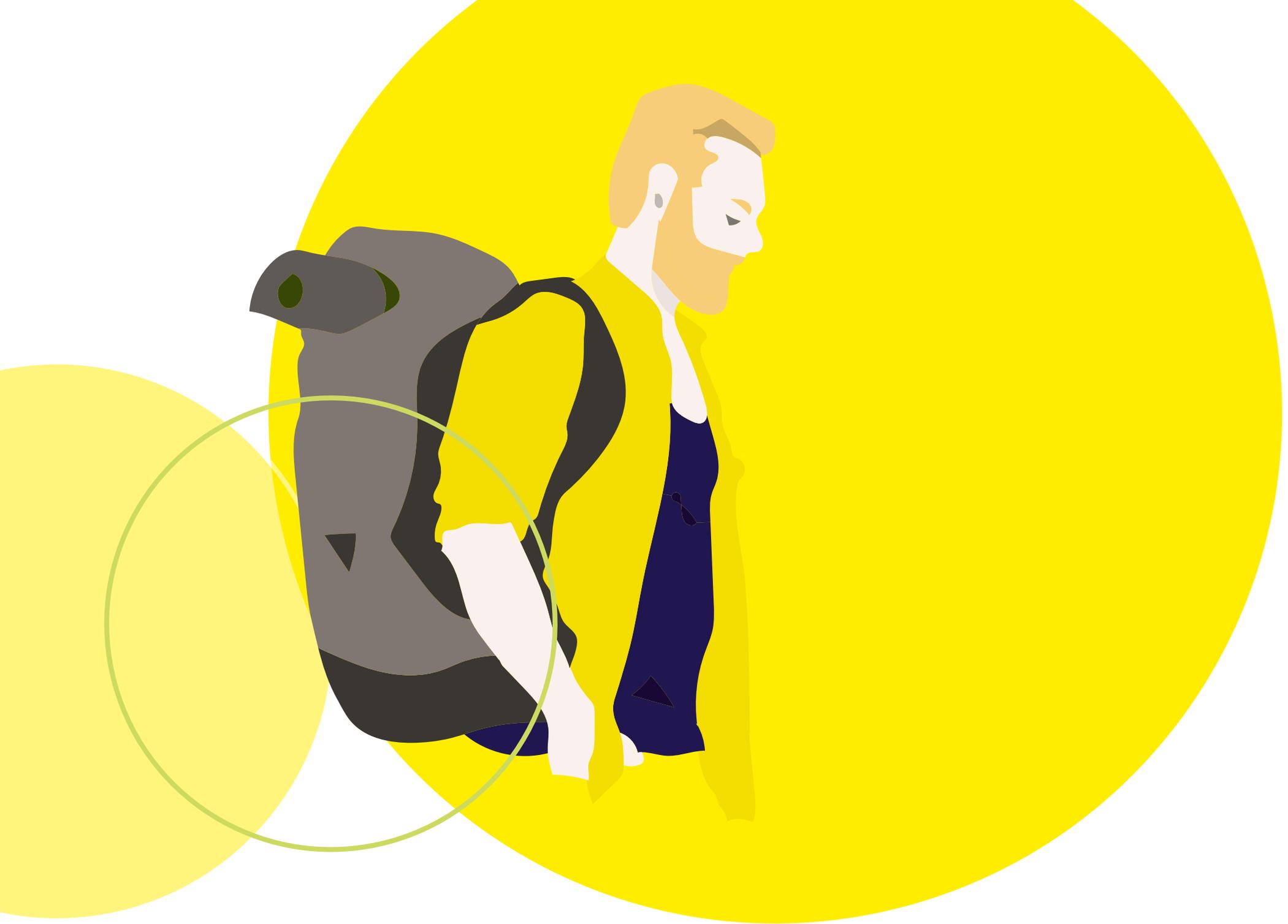
Coop4EDU – cooperative entrepreneurship education

Coop4Edu is an Erasmus + project lead by the University of Alcalà aiming to include cooperative entrepreneurship within university and further education curricula. The partners developed 6 educational resources that can be utilised by trainers and educators to provide their students with knowledge about 3 main topics connected with the cooperative model: cooperative entrepreneurship (definition, principles, history), business (business model, management) and practical aspects (digitalisation). All resources will be free to use by any education institution, mainstreaming the cooperative model in academia.

Young European Cooperators Network

Cooperatives Europe supports the activities of the Young European Cooperators Network (YECN), particularly the development of the network and its projects. In the past year we assisted the Board of YECN in the development of an annual plan focused on the strengthening of the network. We also facilitated a meeting between YECN and the Turkish young cooperators during a meeting in Izmir, which marked the beginning of a close cooperation.





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Social economy

Sustainability has become the focus of the discourse on social economy not only among all types of enterprises, but also for public authorities which have launched new initiatives across Europe. This new spotlight, however, has always been part of the 'DNA' of cooperatives – the key actors of Social Economy. Cooperatives Europe, together with other Social Economy key players, works to ensure that the EU policies and actions on Social Economy count cooperatives with all their specificities – including the unique governance model and their inclusive approach – and go beyond the scope of social enterprises.



Key actions

- Strengthened the position of social economy enterprises at the EU level by campaigning for the renewal of the Social Economy Intergroup within the European Parliament together with other partners, including Social Economy Europe.
- Contributed as an expert to the report of a sub-working group 'clusters' of the European Commission's Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprise (GECES). Common cooperative priorities, impact and recommendations regarding the COVID-19 crisis were also presented during a plenary session together with members CECOP.
- Voiced the cooperative contributions and needs at an international expert workshop on statistics in the Social and Solidarity Economy, supporting the need for indicators that include the full spectrum of social economy, including cooperatives.
- Advocated for the cooperative position on topics such as the preparation of the upcoming action plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights.



The Social Economy Intergroup (SEIG) serves as a meeting place for the Members of the European Parliament from all Member States and stakeholders to exchange views and concerns regarding EU policies and legislation linked to Social Economy issues. The SEIG ensures that the European Parliament, Commission and the Council of the European Union take into account Social Economy and all its actors, including cooperatives, while developing their policies and regulations. The SEIG regularly invites Social Economy actors, including Cooperatives Europe, to its meetings, allowing us to bring the voice of cooperative enterprises to the table.

What is the Social Economy Intergroup?

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International development

We are actively working to increase cooperatives' recognition as key international development actors, in order to build a sustainable, inclusive world that puts people before profit. Those efforts have been reinforced by the Framework Partnership Agreement on international development ([#coops4dev](#)) signed between the International Cooperative Alliance and the European Commission. The Commission has granted an extension of this Partnership until May 2021. The [Cooperatives Europe Development Platform](#) (CEDP) will, therefore, be further supported to facilitate cooperation on advocacy, programming, capacity building and research.

Key actions

- Cooperatives were recognised in the European Parliament Resolution of the Neighbourhood, Development International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) - the regulation setting the funding priorities for EU international development and cooperation as part of the EU budget (MFF). We are working with the EU Institutions towards the acknowledgement and eligibility of cooperatives within the policy and programming of the NDICI.
- Cooperatives Europe facilitated a reflection on gender equality and women's empowerment within and via the cooperative model globally during the ICA's global conference in Kigali, Rwanda. It was one of four sessions organised under the #coops4dev Partnership.
- The first #coops4dev Global Youth Forum on Cooperative Entrepreneurship 2020 (GYF20) took place in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. The event brought together 180 young participants and 35 trainers from 50 countries to learn, debate and enrich their experiences of the cooperative model.
- Cooperative youth start-ups were supported worldwide through the Global Cooperative Entrepreneurs (GCE) mentoring programme - inspired by CoopStarter 2.0 project. Participants also began to use and contribute to an open-source Knowledge Base technology developed by #coops4dev to index cooperative entrepreneurship resources (see chapter 3).





European Development Days - 2019



Cooperatives Europe took part in the 2019 European Development Days, a conference organised by the European Commission. Centred on the theme “Addressing inequalities: building a world which leaves no one behind,” the event presented the activities of the Cooperatives Europe Development Platform (CEDP) and of the #coops4dev Partnership. A Report Lab saw a debate around our publication ‘Cooperatives and Peace’ with guests presenting the contribution of cooperatives in empowering communities affected by conflict. We also facilitated a brainstorming on youth empowerment and a debate on renewable energy, gender and environmental inequalities. Two cooperators from the field were invited to demonstrate the cooperative difference, showcasing a Kenyan project on women’s leadership and governance and an Iranian cooperative supporting local rural producers.

5.1 Global and coordinated cooperative research

Together with each region of the ICA, Cooperatives Europe is conducting research including a statistical mapping of cooperative actors and a legal framework analysis. The first country reports are available on the new website www.coops4dev.coop. A global thematic research on youth is also in progress, covering youth engagement in twenty different countries.

The latest report "[Cooperatives and Peace: Strengthening Democracy, Participation and](#)

[Trust - A Case Study Approach](#)," produced with the CEDP, was presented at various cooperative conferences in Montreal, Berlin and Manchester.



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Collaborative economy

SCC: Sharing, collaboration, cooperation

As sharing platforms continue to grow bringing disruptive innovation to many sectors with a priority on profit maximisation, Cooperatives Europe focuses on an alternative version of such economy that is not only truly collaborative but also cooperative, putting people first. Could the combination of online platforms, community building tools, and cooperative governance bring innovation to the current collaborative economy, void of true collaboration? Our projects look towards coworking spaces as anchors for innovation and opportunities for cooperation.

Sharing, Collaboration, Cooperation (SCC) is an Erasmus+ project that aims to develop new collaborative spaces both in Europe and internationally. Partners from Belgium, Canada, France, Italy, and Spain, coordinated by Cooperatives Europe, are currently developing supporting tools to aid new projects. This includes mapping interesting experiences of collaborative spaces (co-working, innovation communities, shared labs etc.) and an interactive map of collaborative spaces to be featured on the website www.scc.coop. The project will end in April 2021.



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Research

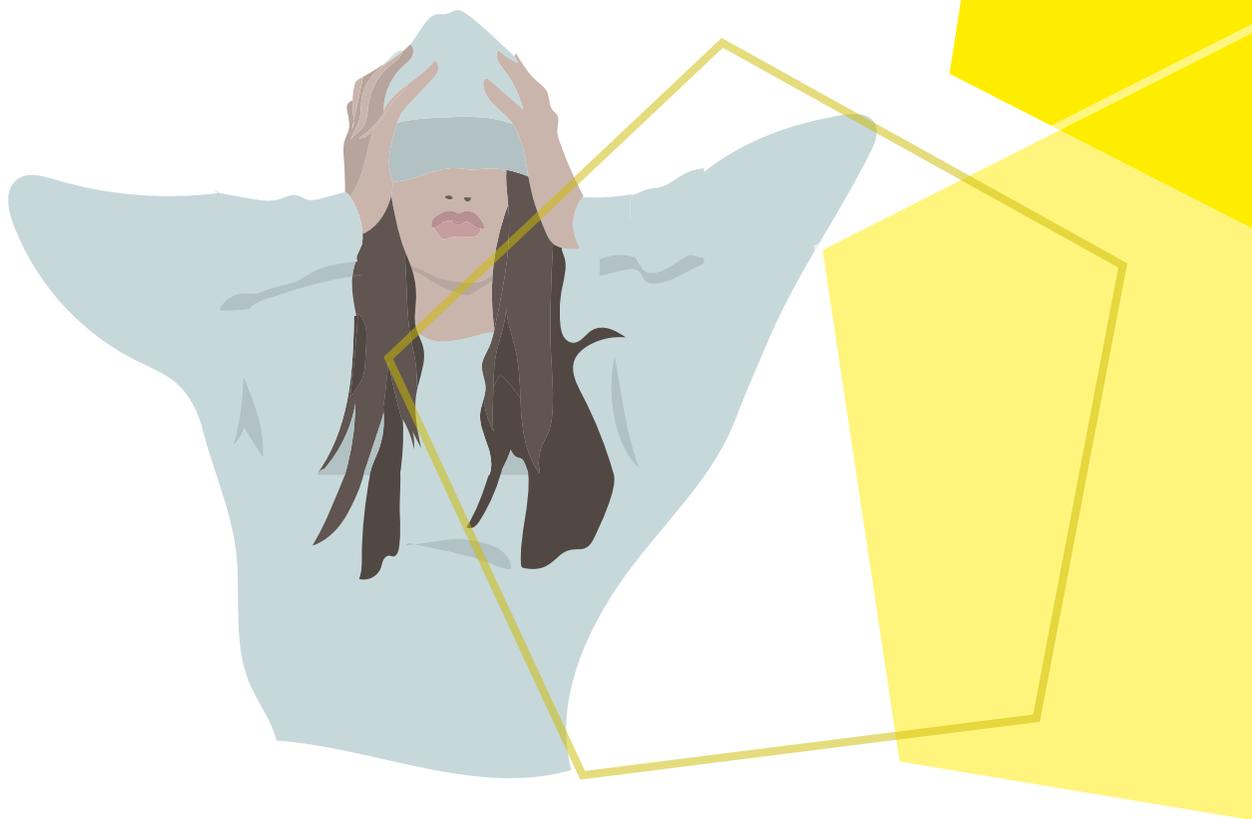
Cooperative research not only supports our advocacy efforts and the implementation of programmes, but also helps us to anticipate the challenges the cooperative movement might face and structure our collective response. Research in its own right is a new topic for Cooperatives Europe that is opening new doors both at national and European levels.

An expanding network

This year Cooperatives Europe and the ICA-Europe's Research Committee have begun to develop a joint action plan on promotion, project collaboration and advocacy activities concerning research. A first step of such collaboration has been the submission of a common project proposal on food waste between the research committee and members Euro Coop under the European Commission's Horizon 2020

programme.

Our previous research on '[Cooperatives and Peace](#)' as well as ongoing work on a [Legal Framework Analysis](#) of cooperatives, both part of the #coops4dev Partnership, were presented and discussed at the ICA-CCR Europe Research Committee's conference in Berlin.





Gender

Introduction

Women's participation in the economy and the society, as promoted by the cooperative model, not only leads to a more equal economy and society, but also contributes towards a sustainable development and economic growth. Promotion of gender equality is taken on by our Gender Working Group which inserts cooperative input within European policies as well as develops the actions at the level of the cooperative movement.

Gender Working Group: key actions

- Promoted and exchanged on the activities of the working group with key Italian Members of the European Parliament (MEPs).
- Provided cooperative input for European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy through consultations.

- Met with the European Commission's Gender Equality Commissioner Helena Daili, leading to future follow-up actions.
- Launched a survey on the current state of gender balance within the Working Group's membership.
- Contributed to the activities of International Cooperative Alliance's Gender Working Group, including the organisation of a session on gender at the ICA's conference in Kigali.

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Governance

Board

The Board of Cooperatives Europe ensures the implementation of the yearly working programme. In addition, a strong focus was put on the new term of the European Institutions and the extension for the ICA-EU partnership #coops4dev. Cooperatives Europe also prepares its positioning within the International Cooperative Alliance and takes part in the strategy building for the ICA through consultations. Regular informal contact was ensured between the board and secretariat during the lockdown period.

Relations with members

The secretariat welcomed a number of national and international delegations in Brussels to introduce our work and discuss opportunities for the cooperative movement. The Board meetings hosted by

the members were also an opportunity to meet the national cooperative movements, helping to better understand their challenges and strengths. Cooperatives Europe also participated to member's events, such as the conference on cooperatives and the Social Economy in Antalya, Turkey, and the international consumer cooperative forum in Moscow, Russia.

The voice of European cooperatives

The common voice of the cooperative movement in Europe is ensured through the EUCC: European Union Coordination Committee. Made up of European sectoral organisations and national umbrella organisations, the group organised a reflective seminar to set a shared vision that Cooperatives Europe, together with its members, could promote regarding public authorities.

Participations to ICA activities

Cooperatives Europe participates to the activities of the International Cooperative Alliance through several thematic

Working Groups, including on the topics of communication, legal framework, and membership. Strong collaboration is achieved through meetings with regional directors, sectors and a separate task team for the ICA-EU partnership #coops4dev. We also support European board members and experts who participate to ICA' Committees on gender, membership and legal framework.





ÊTRE HUMAINS
MENSCH SEIN
BEING HUMAN

2019 Financial information

Income



Membership fees

48%

Project incomes

46%

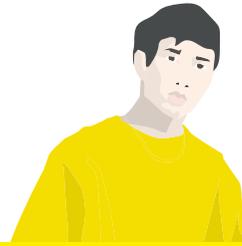
Donation

1%

Others

4%

Expenses



Personnel

60%

Meeting + others

4%

Travel premises

13%

Project expenses

22%

External services

1%



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