

## Press Release

### Recognizing the role of co-operatives in the domestic economy – UK example

#### **19 January 2012 - In the wake of the International Year of Co-operatives, UK government announced today a new consolidated Act for Co-operatives.**

UK government announced today that they are to refer the legislation governing co-operatives and mutuals to the Law Commission. This announcement, made by the Prime Minister David Cameron, means that the 17 separate pieces of legislation governing the sector, much of which dates back to 1965 and has been developed piecemeal, may now be consolidated into one Act.

The announcement comes at the start of the International Year of Co-operatives, a global campaign launched by the United Nations to increase understanding of co-operative businesses. In 64/136 resolution, which proclaims 2012 International Year of Co-operatives, the UN urges governments to take 'appropriate measures aimed at creating a supportive and enabling environment for the development of cooperatives by, inter alia, [...] promoting and implementing better legislation'.

Ed MAYO, Secretary General of Co-operatives UK, said: "The new act is intended to make it as easy and natural to form a co-operative as any other form of business. We are delighted to see the Coalition taking action to put co-operative businesses on an equal footing and create a diverse economy."

Klaus NIEDERLÄNDER, director of Cooperatives Europe, said: "Next to making it easier and less costly for citizens to set up a co-operative, the recognition of co-operatives' contribution to a fairer and more equitable society will need to be stressed during 2012. Democratic governance and member ownership of co-operative enterprises provide the right balance between business and ethics".

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Notes to the editors:

Cooperatives Europe – the Europe region of the International Co-operative Alliance – is the European cross-sectoral organization representing co-operative enterprises. It promotes the co-operative business model in Europe and provides advocacy, communication and business development services to its 91 member co-operative organizations from 34 European countries across all business sectors. Its members represent 123 million individual member co-operators owning 160 000 co-operative enterprises and providing jobs to 5.4 million European citizens – a force for economic growth and social change.

A co-operative enterprise is a group of people acting together to meet the common needs and aspirations of its members, sharing ownership and making decisions democratically. Co-operatives have members – not shareholders – that take decisions democratically. Whether the members are employees, producers or customers, they are everyday people who have an equal say in what the business does and share in the profits.

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