

**22,959,600**

SMEs at EU level

**450,000**

SMEs transferred  
each year

**46,000**

SMEs per  
year could  
become  
new and  
sustainable  
worker  
cooperatives

(estimation : TransfertoCOOPS)

## TransfertoCOOPS! Discover EU practices to transfer SMEs into worker-owned cooperatives

For more information, visit the site dedicated to transferring your business into a worker cooperative and find the contact details for your EU national cooperative contacts:

[www.transfertocoops.eu](http://www.transfertocoops.eu)

This European project is coordinated by the Confederation of worker cooperatives in France (CG Scop) and by Cooperatives Europe, which can direct you to the relevant point of contact in your own country to get further support :

[transfertocoops@coopseurope.coop](mailto:transfertocoops@coopseurope.coop)



design: terre-june\* - CG Scop / illustration: Possum Interactive



## transferring a business into a worker cooperative

what if the best persons to take over your  
business were already a part of it?

According to the European Commission, around 450,000 firms and over two million employees are transferred to new owners every year (European Commission, 2011). Cooperatives make up a large part of the EU economy – with over **127 million members**, over **130,000 cooperative enterprises** and **4.3 million employees**, they generate nearly **€ 990 billion in annual turnover** (Cooperatives Europe, 2015). Transferring your business into a worker cooperative has more benefits than you think – visit our website to find out more: [www.transfertocoops.eu](http://www.transfertocoops.eu)



This project is  
co-founded by  
the European Union

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Retiring soon?

Entrust your business to your employees!

Are you several employees wishing to take over your company?

Become cooperative entrepreneurs!

You can:

- > ensure that your jobs are secure and your expertise is sustainable
- > invest in a collective and democratic project

Discover all the benefits of transferring SMEs into worker-owned cooperatives

### 1 A collective project

A worker cooperative is a cooperative business in which the employees are majority members. These enterprises exist to serve their members and they are owned by their workers.

### 2 Democratic governance

The worker-members vote on major decisions in general meetings according to the "one person, one vote" principle, regardless of the amount of share capital held.

in concrete terms, what does this change ?

### 3 Fairly distributed profits

The profits are distributed fairly in worker cooperatives. Rather than rewarding external investors, a worker cooperative shares its profits amongst the members, who are mainly its workers.

### 4 Priority to the sustainability of the business

The profit reserves become the property of the business. It contributes towards strengthening its shareholders' equity and ensuring its future.

#### >> TRANSFERRING YOUR BUSINESS INTO A WORKER COOPERATIVE:

This process entails several steps, from analysing the business, through to your legal set-up, to all the key steps in transferring your business into a worker cooperative:

**ANTICIPATION**  
(employees informed in advance)

**ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION**  
(financial analysis, social audit, enterprise value, etc.)

**COMPOSING A MANAGEMENT TEAM**  
(support from the transferor, etc.)

**LEGAL AND FINANCIAL SET-UP**  
(drafting the articles of association, direct conversion, purchasing the shares of the transferor, etc.)

**ADVICE AND TRAINING**

**MONITORING THE BUSINESS**