

26 October 2020:

130 Years of Cooperative Movement in Bulgaria

2020 was historically destined to pass under the auspices of the 130th Anniversary of the cooperative movement in Bulgaria.

This is a year for which we have planned many national and international events. They were aimed to show to the society and the institutions that despite the difficulties and the public – economic vicissitudes, 130 years after its beginning the cooperative movement is alive, competitive, and capable of developing independently and working successfully for the people.

Unfortunately, many of the events planned were cancelled due to the crisis, such as the hosting of the Global Board of the International Cooperative Alliance, the Board of Cooperatives Europe and the European conference with the participation of the Economic and Social Council of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, representatives of the European Commission, the Bulgarian Industrial Association, and other social partners and organisations.

We made efforts to seek opportunities to compensate at least a small portion of what the pandemic took from us. With several specific and humble activities, which are the real cooperative response to the crisis and which enhance our visibility, demonstrating the strength of the cooperative business over these 130 years and despite the state of emergency in the country, we – the cooperatives and cooperative unions – are together and we will continue to fight the challenges of time together.

In March 2020, at the very beginning of the pandemic, the Central Cooperative Union signed with the U Automobile Plant “URAL”, a contract for the manufacturing and delivery of 10 mobile COOP shops and one COOP Health Care vehicle.

During the celebratory meeting of the CCU Board on the occasion of the Anniversary, Professor Petar Stafanov, President of the Central Cooperative Union, presented officially the start of a new trade development project for the delivery of essential goods and provision of mobile health care services to the population living in remote, high mountain and small settlements.

"... We have proven that, as difficult as it is, we are capable of planning our own survival and development, without forgetting, not even for a split second, that people are what is most important to us. Therefore, I would like to thank you once again for the support for the myriad of projects that we implemented together. They are a proof that together we can overcome any crisis and continue forward stronger, more successfully and more socially than ever", said Professor Petar Stafanov, President of the Central Cooperative Union in his address. The historical experience and rich traditions of the Bulgarian cooperative movement demonstrate that cooperatives are and will be an important social and economic phenomenon not only in Bulgaria, but in Europe and the world.