



CONSUMER CO-OPERATIVES AND EMPLOYMENT

Consumer co-operatives are organisations that are owned and controlled by their members, who are typically consumers of the goods or services provided by the co-operative. These organisations operate on the **principle of cooperation**, rather than competition, and are designed to meet the needs of their members while also promoting social and **economic development** in their communities.

One of the key benefits of consumer co-operatives is that they can provide a more **stable and secure source of employment** for workers. Being a co-op means maximising benefits for your members rather than pursuing profit at all costs. This means that they are often better able to weather economic downturns and provide more stable employment opportunities for their workers. Additionally, because the members of the co-operative are also the owners, they have a greater stake in the success of the organisation and are more likely to invest in its long-term sustainability.

Consumer co-operatives can also help to create more **sustainable, equitable economies** by promoting local production and consumption.

By sourcing goods and services locally, consumer co-operatives can help to reduce the environmental impact of transportation and **support small businesses** in their communities. Co-operatives **reduce income inequality** by providing a more equitable distribution of profits and empowering workers to participate in the decision-making process.

Celebrating International Labour Day 2023, it is important to recognise the crucial role that consumer co-operatives play in supporting workers and creating more sustainable, equitable economies. By promoting cooperation over competition and prioritising the needs of the members, consumer co-operatives create a brighter future for workers and communities around the world.

Euro Coop members are actively engaging with local communities, **advocating for fair labour practices** and providing their **750,000** employees with safe and supportive working environments.



SPAIN



Consum has implemented a **5-day working week** in its stores, providing one day off per week, a day less than other companies in the same sector. This initiative, already available in more than half of its supermarkets and expected to be extended throughout the entire network in 2024, aims to improve work-life balance, increase productivity, and boost job satisfaction.

Moreover, Consum's commitment to its employees is further demonstrated through its numerous recognitions, such as the **EFR seal of Family-Responsible Company** and its 10th consecutive Top Employers certificate, which identifies it as one of the best organisations to work for. In terms of employment, Consum is dedicated to stable and quality job opportunities, with a sustained growth of between **500 and**

1,000 new contracts a year and 95% of permanent jobs. Recently, a salary increase of 9% was approved to improve workers' purchasing power.

Additionally, Consum has launched its **IV Equality Plan 2022-2025**, aiming to ensure equal treatment and opportunities between men and women, contributing to further re-

ducing the wage gap, which has already decreased by 24% in the last 14 years.

Consum aims for stable, quality job opportunities with 500-1,000 new contracts per year and 95% permanent positions.



SLOVAKIA



The Slovakian retail sector has seen a positive increase in the percentage of women in recent years, and Coop Jednota stands as an example of this trend. The management of the market leader comprises **49% women**, while an impressive 85% of the co-operative's 14,000 employees are women. These women hold various job positions, ranging from goods receipt in small villages to the presidency of a consumer co-operative. Coop Jednota's approach to **gender equality and equal opportunities** ensures that every employee receives fair treatment in terms of job function and salary.

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Ensuring gender equality and equal opportunities is one of the basic preconditions to make Slovakia a successful and cohesive country. Employees should be free to develop their potential equally, whatever they are women or men. Removing pre-existing inequalities and prejudices is what every successful company should do.

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Michal Kišša, Coop Jednota Foundation Executive Director

ESTONIA



Coop Eesti has been recognised as the **top employer in the trade sector** for the fourth year running. This achievement is a testament to their commitment to the employees and stands out in a fiercely competitive labour market. One of Coop Eesti's key strengths is its **emphasis on locality**, with local people managing and working in its co-operatives, fostering a sense of belonging and community among its workforce. Additionally, Coop Eesti provides its employees with ample opportunities for professional growth and flexible working arrangements to meet their diverse needs. Coop takes pride in its exceptional work environment, cost-effective teams, and commitment to the **development of its local area**, constantly on the lookout for exceptional talent to join its ranks.



Coop Eesti's strength lies in its focus on locality. Its co-operatives are owned, managed, and staffed by locals, creating a strong sense of community and belonging among employees. This eliminates the potential for unfamiliar foreign bosses, ensuring a cohesive work environment that values employees' unique insights and experiences.

Kerstin Jaani, the HR Director of Coop Eesti Keskühistu

FINLAND



S Group is committed to safeguarding the rights of employees, both within their own organisation and in their partners' operations, in Finland and worldwide. They promote **non-discrimination and accessibility** while ensuring **occupational safety and equality** for their staff. S Group is also aware of the indirect impact their operations may have on the human rights of those working in their supply chains and, as such, monitor the implementation of working life rights through third-party audits. They have also launched a new **Radical Transparency research model** to investigate the root causes of human rights issues and find innovative solutions with their partners. S Group's human rights principles guide their approach to respecting internationally recognised human rights, and they hold their partners to the same high standards.



Using a Radical Transparency research model, S Group is able to address human rights issues and holding their partners to the same high standards.



NETHERLANDS



Coop Netherlands offers its employees an excellent opportunity to grow and develop their skills through its own training facility, **the Coop College**. The College provides a wide range of courses, from short e-learning modules to subject-

oriented vocational training, and offers opportunities for employees to combine **practical experience with theoretical knowledge**.

Coop Netherlands encourages its employees to pursue their ambitions and provides support for them to progress to higher levels within the organisation. Through **the Talent Pool**, the retailer provides exciting modules and assignments for a year or two, which help employees to continue to improve in their profession.

Coop Netherlands also offers separate modules, for those who prefer not to commit to a full year of study, and provides opportunities for experienced supermarket managers to obtain an associate degree or bachelor's degree.

Coop Netherlands supports the growth and development of its employees through the Coop College, offering a wide range of training courses and opportunities for practical experience



ICELAND

samkaup

The retail chain Samkaup has recently introduced a **comprehensive welfare program** for its employees. The initiative entails the company providing **financial support** for up to six hours of specialist services, including but not limited to financial advice, marriage counseling, psychological therapy, and lifestyle guidance. The inspiration for this project arose in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and after a successful trial period, the company has decided to expand the program permanently.

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The positive impact of this initiative has been significant in terms of reducing employee turnover and increasing job satisfaction. The program is easy to implement, and we are pleased to provide a valuable resource that enhances our employees' well-being and job satisfaction.

Gunnur Líf Gunnarsdóttir, Samkaup HR Director

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ITALY



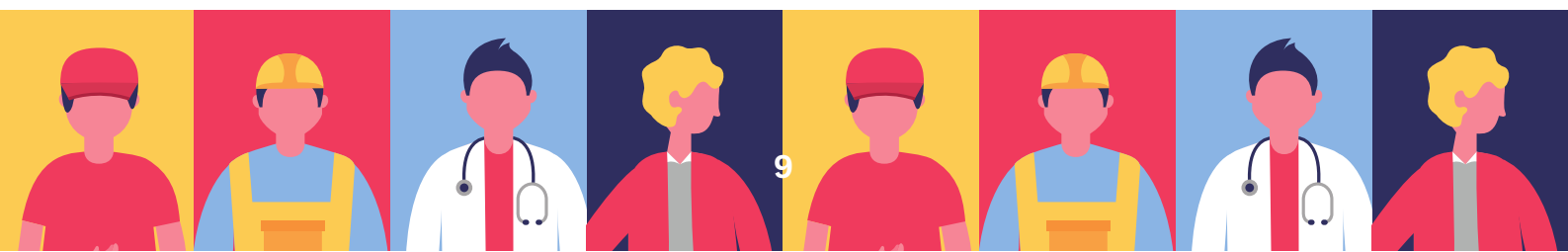
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Our commitment is to sustainability in all aspects. The campaign urges us to choose sustainable products, services, and behaviors for the environment and society. Our goal is to make comprehensive sustainability, including environmental, social, and ethical aspects, accessible to all.

Maura Latini, CEO of Coop Italia

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Coop Italia's dedication to **ethical supply chains** led to their collaboration with Yvan Sagnet, who founded the association "**No Cap**" in 2017 after leading protests against worker exploitation in Puglia in 2011. Coop Italia recognised the value in Sagnet's experience and knowledge of worker exploitation in the tomato industry and saw an opportunity to support his cause by offering a platform to sell his ethical and sustainable products. In fact, the retailer sells certified **organic and ethical tinned tomatoes** under the "No Cap" product line. The tinned tomatoes are not only certified organic and ethical, but they also come from farms that follow strict regulations to protect workers' rights and ensure safe and healthy working conditions.



UKRAINE



УКРАЇНА

The Trade Union of Employees of Consumer Co-operatives of Ukraine is committed to representing and protecting the labour, social, and economic rights and interests of its members. It strives to create **safe working conditions**, organise recreational and health-improvement activities for workers and their families, and enhance the role of collective negotiations and contracts. The Sectoral Agreement, with its 225 commitments, aims to develop consumer co-operatives in Ukraine and improve the level of **social and economic protection for workers**. Despite the ongoing military conflict in Ukraine, the Trade Union continues



to prioritise the **assistance to displaced enterprises, observance of employees' rights, and labour safety under martial law**. They also provide support to the Military Forces and internally displaced persons. The Trade Union recognises the values of decent work, social rights, safe working conditions, peace, and democracy.

The Trade Union protects the labour rights of its members and supports the development of consumer co-operatives while also providing assistance to those affected by conflict and martial law.

