

Activity Report 2011





is the **European Community of Consumer Co-operatives**, whose members are the **national organisations of consumer co-operatives** in 18 European countries.

Created in 1957, Euro Coop today represents over **4,500 local and regional co-operatives**, the members of which amount to more than **30 million consumers** across Europe.

Consumer co-operatives are **enterprises owned by consumers**, acting mainly in food retail. Their overall **turnover amounts to more than €74 billion**, with **36,000 points of sale** and **450,000 employees**.

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Working in partnership with Consumer Co-operatives Worldwide (CCW), a sector organisation of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), which brings together consumer co-operatives within the ICA membership

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
EUROPEAN REPRESENTATION	6
FOOD POLICY.....	6
<i>EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health</i>	6
<i>European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)</i>	7
<i>Nanotechnologies and food safety</i>	7
<i>Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Agricultural Products Quality Policy.....</i>	8
<i>Animal health and welfare.....</i>	9
<i>Food information</i>	9
ENTERPRISES POLICY	11
<i>Members' participation</i>	11
<i>Report on mergers and acquisitions</i>	11
<i>Database of national co-operative laws and taxation regimes</i>	11
<i>United Nations International Year of Co-operatives (IYC) 2012.....</i>	12
<i>Food chain.....</i>	12
<i>European Retail Action Plan.....</i>	13
<i>Social Economy Intergroup</i>	14
SUSTAINABILITY POLICY	15
<i>Climate change and energy</i>	15
<i>Sustainable consumption and production.....</i>	16
<i>Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)</i>	17
<i>Organic farming</i>	17
<i>Sustainable fishing</i>	17
<i>Waste</i>	18
<i>Additional considerations</i>	18
CONSUMER POLICY	19
<i>European Consumer Consultative Group</i>	19
<i>European Consumer Summit.....</i>	19
<i>Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue.....</i>	20
<i>Collective redress</i>	20
<i>Summit on Alternative Dispute Resolution</i>	21
<i>Consumer Rights Directive</i>	21
CO-OPERATIVE ACTIVITIES	22
COOPERATIVES EUROPE	22
INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE AND CONSUMER CO-OPERATIVES WORLDWIDE	22
MEMBERSHIP & GOVERNANCE	23
GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND BOARD MEETINGS	23
MEMBERSHIP	23
EURO COOP WORKING GROUPS.....	23
PRESIDENCY	23
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	24
<i>People</i>	24
<i>Products</i>	24
<i>Environment.....</i>	24

<i>Democracy</i>	24
COMMUNICATIONS	25
PUBLICATIONS	25
<i>Newsletter</i>	25
<i>Policy-focused publications</i>	25
<i>Website</i>	25
CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS	25
EURO COOP IN THE MEDIA	26
WHO'S WHO	27
GENERAL ASSEMBLY DELEGATES	27
WORKING GROUP MEMBERS	27
<i>Food Retail Working Group</i>	27
<i>Sustainability Policy Working Group</i>	28
<i>Co-operative Identity Working Group</i>	28
MEMBER ORGANISATIONS	29

INTRODUCTION

As this report will show, 2011 was a productive year for Euro Coop. We not only oversaw important actions in our policy areas, but also integrated a variety of new topics into our work, including the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives 2012 and the European Retail Action Plan.

Regarding food policy, Euro Coop took action on many issues, including obesity, food safety, nanotechnologies, EU agriculture policy, animal welfare and food information. We worked alongside the European institutions through the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health and various forums with fellow stakeholders. Our efforts resulted in the creation of the “Fight against obesity” database and important interventions at European conferences and high-level meetings.

Developments in enterprises policy were particularly important in 2011 because of the collaborative work achieved through the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain and the progress made towards a European Retail Action Plan. Euro Coop also completed several projects within the framework of the Co-operative Identity Working Group: a report on member participation, a report on mergers and acquisitions, preparations for the 2012 International Year of Co-operatives and a database on national co-operative laws.

Our work on sustainability issues resulted in a 2011 follow-up report to our project “Climate Change and Consumer Co-operatives: Taking the Challenge Forward” and an increased focus on sustainable consumption and production at EU level. We also oversaw important policy developments in sustainable fishing and food waste while continuing to monitor issues like GMOs, organic farming and Fair Trade.

In the domain of consumer policy, Euro Coop’s work with the European institutions aimed to enhance and protect consumers’ rights. Through participation in platforms such as the European Consumer Consultative Group and the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue, Euro Coop helped advance the subject of nanomaterials, collective redress and Alternative Dispute Resolution.

As regards co-operative-focused work, Euro Coop was an active member of Cooperatives Europe, and participated in meetings with fellow European sector organisations to coordinate the EU-level activities during the International Year. We continued to provide secretariat support to Consumer Co-operatives Worldwide and represent CCW on an international scale.

This report will provide a more detailed look at our work over the past year. Confident in our 2011 achievements, Euro Coop hopes that 2012 will offer just as many opportunities for success, so that we may continue to effectively advance the needs and interests of our members.

EUROPEAN REPRESENTATION

Food Policy

EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health

In 2011, Euro Coop led various initiatives in the field of health, physical activity and nutrition. Euro Coop actively collaborated with European public authorities to help them tackle the issue of obesity.



EU Platform on Diet,
Physical Activity and Health

First of all, Euro Coop contributed to the work of the EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. Euro Coop attended the four annual meetings organised by the European Commission on the following topics: education, marketing and advertising (with a focus on children) and reformulation. Like the other participants, Euro Coop was offered the opportunity to share information and views on current developments in the implementation of the EU Nutrition Strategy.

As part of its work within the Platform, Euro Coop renewed its active commitments carried out by Coop Italy in the form of reformulation (the “Club 4-10”) and by Eroski through its elimination of trans-fatty acids in own-brand products, a campaign to prevent child obesity and superior nutrition labelling on 2,000 Eroski products.

To complement its work in this field, Euro Coop launched in February a new online database called “Fight against obesity”, which gathers the main initiatives carried out by its member organisations aimed at reducing obesity and improving nutrition. This database will represent, as of 2012, Euro Coop's major commitment to the Platform.

Euro Coop's database groups different types of action, from marketing campaigns to product reformulation, from education to lifestyle and physical activity. The initiatives are classified by country/member association and by type of action, following the scheme of the European Commission's Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

In addition, Euro Coop elaborated a report that presents the primary successful initiatives of European consumer co-operatives over recent years in the field of health and nutrition and in the fight against obesity, ranging from consumer education campaigns to responsible advertising and marketing practices, conducted at both local and national levels.

Last but not least, Euro Coop intervened on 3rd March 2011 at the 5th Annual European Nutrition and Lifestyle Conference¹ in Brussels. The conference, which Euro Coop supported as a partner, is a major event of the Brussels agenda on food and nutrition. Paola Testori Coggi, Director General of the European Commission's DG Health and Consumers (DG SANCO), Members of the European Parliament and industry and NGO representatives unveiled their strategy and position on very sensitive topics such as health claims, nutrient profiles, the EU

¹ http://www.eu-ems.com/summary.asp?event_id=66&page_id=456

Platform's future role, food labelling and taxes on unhealthy foods. Euro Coop's intervention focused on consumer co-operatives' approach to the provision of food information to consumers. In particular, the relevance of additional forms of expressing nutrition information (the so-called national schemes) was highlighted, underlining the importance of respecting different habits of consumers across Europe.

At the end of September on the occasion of an obesity governance conference for stakeholders, Euro Coop was invited to give its perspective on public-private partnerships (PPPs) in relation to obesity and public health. The conference was the final step of an EU project which brought together different universities and private actors across Europe. Euro Coop presented its "Fight against obesity" database, which gathers some very good examples of PPPs.

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)



In 2011, Euro Coop attended the three annual meetings of the Stakeholder Consultative Platform organised by EFSA in April, June and November. During the year, particular focus was given to the discussions on the definition of EFSA's new Independence Policy. Because guaranteeing the independence of EFSA's scientific assessments and decision-making process is of high importance to consumers, Euro Coop intervened in a crucial workshop in Brussels organised by EFSA on these issues in the presence of high level policy makers. On this occasion, Euro Coop restated its position that EFSA should operate on the basis of principles such as transparency and balance and that the revolving door effect should be avoided. Euro Coop also expressed its favour for a public-funded science.

Furthermore, Euro Coop contributed to several consultations opened by EFSA in which it recalled the need to involve consumer representatives to an extensive degree in all stages of EFSA's activities. Euro Coop also urged EFSA to focus on the use of new technologies in food production (e.g. nanomaterials, animal cloning, GMOs).

In parallel, Euro Coop closely followed developments at EFSA regarding technical dossiers (nanotechnologies, food additives, zoonoses), communication activities and its internal restructuring.

Nanotechnologies and food safety

In 2011, Euro Coop continued to follow the lively political debate on nanotechnologies in Europe. As part of this work, Euro Coop paid close attention to developments in EU legislation concerning the use of engineered nanomaterials in food production. On 29th and 30th March 2011, Euro Coop participated in the international 4th Nano Safety for Success Dialogue organised by the European Commission in Brussels. This event offered all interested parties (consumer organisations, European public authorities, environmental NGOs, industry) the opportunity to exchange views on the definition of the term "nanomaterial" for regulatory purposes.

Following this event, Euro Coop helped the partners of the Trans Atlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD) elaborate a joint resolution on the need for a mandatory reporting scheme and inventory for nanomaterials contained in consumer products². Euro Coop suggested to refer to a unique and shared definition of nanomaterial and commented on the need to guarantee consumers' right to choose, through appropriate labelling referring to the use of nanomaterial or food contact nanomaterial, if any.

On 20th and 21st June 2011, Euro Coop participated in the twelfth Trans Atlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD) meeting of the Policy Committee on Nanotechnology, which took place in Brussels. On that occasion, Euro Coop restated its position³ and helped finalise the resolution. Participants also exchanged information on legislative developments that have taken place in the field of nanotechnology since 2010, both at European and international level. On the 21st of June, the TACD was presented to governments and European Commission officials, and on the 23rd of June, Euro Coop attended the ANEC/BEUC Nanotechnology experts meeting, which gathered representatives of European and American consumer organisations.

In parallel, Euro Coop monitored the political debate and scientific developments on endocrine disrupting chemicals to be used in consumer products, including food products. On 29th March 2011, Euro Coop attended a seminar on this specific issue. This event took place at the European Parliament and gathered European public authorities, consumer organisations and the industry. It aimed at raising public awareness of the harmful effects of endocrine disruptors (like Bisphenol A) on human health.

In another move to help improve food safety, Euro Coop was invited to give its perspective at the June 2011 General Assembly conference of FEDIOL (EU Vegetable Oil and Proteinmeal Industry) which was titled "Safety in the food and feed chain: situation in the EU and international implications".

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Agricultural Products Quality Policy

In 2011, Euro Coop paid close attention to developments in the EU legislative framework regarding the CAP post-2013. Because of the multiple aspects of agriculture, Euro Coop participated in all relevant conferences and meetings organised by the European public authorities and other stakeholders on the future of the European agriculture policy.

Euro Coop was invited in November 2011 by the "Maison de l'Europe" of the city of Nantes, France to give its perspective on the Commission proposal for the CAP. During the intervention, Euro Coop stressed consumers' expectations about the quality of products, animal welfare and sustainability, as well as the importance of keeping alive rural areas through rural communities.

In addition to the above described initiatives, Euro Coop engaged in joint lobbying actions with the CAP NGOs network. On 23rd June 2011, Euro Coop, along with the other

² http://tacd.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=75

³ http://www.eurocoop.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=87%3AAnanotechnologies-a-great-need-of-attention-for-such-small-particles&catid=42%3Afood-policy&Itemid=189&lang=en

organisations sent an open letter⁴ to the European Parliament that encouraged the definition of an ambitious reform of the CAP to be based on sustainable production and consumption practices.

As far as the quality policy is concerned, Euro Coop participated in the meetings of the Advisory Group on the Quality of Agricultural Production organised and chaired by the European Commission Directorate General responsible for agriculture and rural development (DG AGRI), responded to a DG AGRI consultation on direct sales and met with relevant EU officials.

Animal health and welfare

In 2011, Euro Coop participated in meetings of the DG SANCO Advisory Group on the Food Chain, Animal Health and Plant Health and other relevant conferences to collect information on the developments in the field of animal health.

Particular focus was placed on the European Commission's initiatives regarding the reintroduction of processed animal proteins (PAP) derived from non-ruminants into the feed chain and to the very sensitive political debate on cloning. In this regard, Euro Coop was among the first organisations to sign a declaration against animal cloning drafted by the Brussels-based NGO Eurogroup for Animals.

Along with stakeholders and representatives of member states, Euro Coop also participated in a meeting organised by DG SANCO on the implementation of the Commission Directive on laying hens, highlighting the examples of The Co-operative Group and Coop Italy as big retailers leading in good animal welfare practices.

Food information



The EC Regulation on the provision of food information to consumers was finally adopted in 2011. Euro Coop was very active at the beginning of the year before the European Parliament ENVI Committee vote, meeting all shadow rapporteurs and the most relevant MEPs.

Immediately following the April 2011 Committee vote, Euro Coop released a political statement⁵ to express disapproval about the European Parliament's decision to delete the provision on the mandatory indication of the five key nutrients (salt, sugar, fat, saturated fats and energy content) on the front of packs, while at the same time expressing satisfaction at the possibility of keeping national schemes as an additional way to provide nutritional information.

Euro Coop also communicated to members the latest results of consumer food information studies. On 24th and 25th November, Euro Coop participated in the FLABEL (Food Labelling to

⁴ http://www.eurocoop.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=418%3Acap-and-the-dess-report-open-letter-to-meps-june-2011&catid=42%3Afood-policy&Itemid=189&lang=en

⁵ http://www.eurocoop.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=401%3Aeuro-coop-regrets-deletion-of-provisions-on-mandatory-front-of-pack&catid=47%3Afood-policy&Itemid=194&lang=en

Advance Better Education for Life) Final Conference which involved academic experts from eight European universities, two retail organisations and representatives of European consumer and industry associations. The results demonstrated the complexity of the long debate. Euro Coop is also involved in the final discussions of the project regarding the list of recommendations that should be provided to the European institutions in 2012.

Enterprises Policy

Members' participation

In 2011 Co-operative Identity Working Group members finalised the report on members' participation. This document analyses the ways members do and do not participate in governance, then provides a set of practical recommendations that consumer co-operatives can use as a basis to reinvigorate member participation.

This report constitutes a valuable source of information for Euro Coop members. It is the result of a fruitful collaboration among members who exchanged ideas and experiences over several months.



The report⁶ was approved by the Board in March and officially published on Euro Coop's website in April 2011.

Report on mergers and acquisitions

In addition, Euro Coop developed a report on mergers and acquisitions. This report is another initiative led by the Co-operative Identity Working Group that provides Euro Coop members with an experience-based tool combining practical examples with recommendations for successful consolidation strategies.

Using the experiences of The Co-operative Group (UK) and Coop Netherlands as a base, Working Group members met on 8th and 9th June 2011 in Stockholm to identify a set of 12 recommendations from the consumer co-operative perspective.

The unique report highlights examples of best practices and offers insight into how values-based consumer co-operatives can turn into bigger and more powerful enterprises while preserving the specific characteristics of the co-operative model. Formally adopted by the Board in November 2011 the report was officially published on 18th January 2012.

Database of national co-operative laws and taxation regimes



In 2011 the Euro Coop Co-operative Identity Working Group led a project creating a database presenting different European national co-operative laws and taxation regimes. The database will serve as a source of information for Euro Coop members. Finalised in December 2011 Euro Coop made this database accessible on its website at the end of February 2012.

⁶ http://www.eurocoop.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=395%3Areport-on-members-participation-in-consumer-co-operatives&catid=83%3Areports-memos&Itemid=176&lang=en

The database will be searchable by country and includes a document analysis for each country to provide co-operators with a brief overview of the national co-operative laws governing consumer co-operative enterprises in Europe. Each document highlights main characteristics, advantages and potential areas of improvement of national laws.

United Nations International Year of Co-operatives (IYC) 2012

Over the past twelve months the preparation of the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives 2012 has been a top priority for Euro Coop, who actively supports the development of projects for this purpose. Euro Coop enabled Co-operative Identity Working Group members to exchange their views and information on this subject during the Working Group meetings. In March 2011 Euro Coop published a preliminary report⁷ detailing European consumer co-operatives' plans for the International Year of Co-operatives.



In addition, Working Group members helped the Secretariat define Euro Coop's IYC communication campaign "Co-operative enterprises build a better world" targeted towards the European institutions. A particular focus is being placed on the preparation of Euro Coop's conference to take place in Brussels during the Co-operative Week in April 2012. On 31st October 2011 Euro Coop Secretary General Rodrigo Gouveia participated in the official launch of the International Year of Co-operatives 2012 in New York. On this occasion, he took part in meetings with co-operative leaders to discuss how to raise awareness on the successful, values-based, co-operative business model.

Food chain

The topic of a balanced and fair food chain was still one of the major policy issues for all stakeholders and policy makers involved in agriculture, retail and commerce in 2011.

Euro Coop's engagement with these issues continued through the participation in the different meetings of the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain that took place throughout the year.

Chaired by European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani, Commissioner for Internal Market and Services Michel Barnier and Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Dacian Ciolos, the Forum gathers various European Ministers, European institution representatives, CEOs and representatives from the most significant companies and associations operating in the food chain. It aims to provide all stakeholders with the opportunity to identify fair and unfair practices in a consensual way on the basis of concrete and relevant examples of factual practices occurring along the chain.

⁷

http://www.eurocoop.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=405%3Apreliminary-report-on-consumer-cooperatives-propositions-for-the-international-year-2012&catid=83%3Areports-memos&Itemid=176&lang=en

In March 2011, Euro Coop, together with ten other major European associations representing retail, industry, farmers, brands and traders, started a multi-stakeholder dialogue. Concretely, this was translated into a series of regular meetings focused on improving the business to business relations along the food chain, in a parallel exercise to what was happening in the B2B Platform of the High Level Forum. In these meetings, Euro Coop and the other associations demonstrated to the European Commission their willingness and capacity to find a compromise suitable for all the actors of the chain.

All the participating associations of the multi-stakeholder dialogue elaborated and signed a document that regrouped the overarching principles (and examples of good and bad practices) of fair vertical relationships in the food chain. The document was presented last November and welcomed by the Forum, who asked the food supply representatives to put forward credible implementation options by 2012⁸.

To complement its work, Euro Coop intervened in April at the seminar organised by the European farmers' organisation on the functioning of the short food supply chain. The issue was addressed from the economic, social and agricultural perspective. Euro Coop's intervention focused on the challenges that this model of commerce presents and reiterated consumer co-operatives' openness to explore with farmers its feasibility and profitability.

Euro Coop also participated in two conferences related to the topic of the functioning of the food supply chain and the fairness of the retail market. Both were held in Brussels in May and October 2011 and followed the debates taking place in the European Parliament, in direct contact with MEPs ahead of crucial votes.

European Retail Action Plan

Parallel to the discussions held in the High Level Forum, Euro Coop closely monitored the European Parliament's debate on the report developed by MEP Anna Maria Corazza Bildt (EPP, Sweden): "A More Efficient and Fairer Retail Market". During the year, Euro Coop met with Mrs Corazza Bildt to present the consumer co-operative model as well as its main contributions to the development of a fairer retail market in Europe. Euro Coop also expressed its support for the European Parliament's call on the European Commission to establish a comprehensive European Action Plan for retail, in consultation with the retail sector⁹.

As a follow-up to the European Parliament proposal, which was adopted in July, Euro Coop and four European retail associations sent a joint letter to the Commissioner for Internal Market and Services Michel Barnier asking him to establish a European Retail Action Plan along with the European Parliament and the retail sector.

This dossier is of high importance for economic actors operating in the European retail market. The European Retail Action Plan will thus be a big part of Euro Coop's work in 2012.

⁸ http://www.eurocoop.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=437&catid=47&Itemid=194&lang=en

⁹ http://www.eurocoop.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=423%3Aeuro-coop-welcomes-the-european-parliaments-position-for-a-fairer-retail-market&catid=50%3Aenterprises-policy&Itemid=182&lang=en

Social Economy Intergroup

Euro Coop participated in the Social Economy Intergroup¹⁰ meetings gathering members of the European Parliament, social economy experts, European Commission officials, civil society representatives and other relevant stakeholders. On this occasion, the group discussed financial issues, more specifically the financial instruments for social economy enterprises.

¹⁰ <http://www.socialeconomy.eu.org/spip.php?rubrique60>

Sustainability Policy

Climate change and energy

Climate change and energy policies continued to be a priority in 2011. The Euro Coop Sustainability Policy Working Group (SPWG) worked during its three annual meetings (in April, June and October 2011) on the second follow-up report to the project: “Climate Change and Consumer Cooperatives: Taking the Challenge Forward”¹¹, which was officially launched on 1st December 2011. The report details how the consumer co-operative members of Euro Coop made progress on a variety of issues that they pledged to tackle, including sustainable transportation, energy efficiency of buildings and development of renewable energies.



At the beginning of 2011, Euro Coop joined the Cooperatives Europe’s Energy Policy Expert Working Group (EPE WG). The WG met twice in 2011. Discussions held during these meetings revolved around setting up a strategic plan to promote co-operative values and principles within EU energy policies.

On 13th April 2011, Euro Coop organised the conference “Boosting Renewable Energy Supply and In-Store Energy Efficiency”¹², which was held in the framework of the European Union Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) 2011. The event allowed the audience to get an overview of the EU institutional and environmental NGO standpoints on energy sustainability as well as of ways that consumer co-operatives implement energy sustainability in their daily operations.

On 20th April 2011, Euro Coop published the position: “Euro Coop Response to the EC Consultation on a Roadmap for a Resource Efficient Europe”¹³. The document highlighted in a comprehensive manner Euro Coop’s standpoint on the steps necessary to implement a resource efficient Europe, focussing on the importance of renewable energies, energy efficiency and consumer education.

Against this background and as a means of concrete commitment, Euro Coop continued to collaborate in 2011 with the Belgian NGO initiative “CompenCO2” to offset the CO2 produced by its staff when travelling. Through this initiative, it has submitted quarterly reports to “CompenCO2” for calculation and later payment. Since 2011, “CompenCO2” has been represented by the organisation “CO2logic”¹⁴.

¹¹ http://www.eurocoop.coop/dmdocuments/publication_report/Report_2011_Climate_Change_EN.pdf

¹² http://www.eurocoop.coop/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=392%3Aeuro-coop-conference-qboosting-renewable-energy-supply-and-in-store-energy-efficiency&catid=69%3Aconference&Itemid=170&lang=en

¹³ http://www.eurocoop.coop/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=402%3Aeuro-coop-response-to-the-ec-consultation-on-a-roadmap-for-a-resource-efficient-europe&catid=41%3Aenvironmental-policy&Itemid=193&lang=en

¹⁴ <http://www.co2logic.be/>

Sustainable consumption and production

Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) was in 2011 at the core of Euro Coop's sustainability policy action. All throughout the year, Euro Coop has participated in and given regular input to the works of the Food Sustainable Production and Consumption Round Table (SCP RT). It took part in the SCP RT Steering Committee as well as in the work of the SCP RT Working Groups on Environmental Information Tools (WG2) and Continuous Environmental Improvement (WG3). As a concrete result, the RT formally adopted on 8th December 2011 during its plenary meeting the report "Communicating environmental performance along the food chain"¹⁵.

In 2011, Euro Coop also continued to participate in and regularly contribute to the work of the Retail Forum for Sustainability. In this regard, it put forward several commitments in the framework of the Retailer's Environmental Action Programme (REAP) database and actively participated in the drafting of the issue papers on measurement and reduction of carbon footprint of stores, labelling and packaging optimisation¹⁶.



On 8th September 2011, Euro Coop was invited to the conference "How to communicate to raise consumer awareness and reward the market" to illustrate the steps currently undertaken by the EU Sustainable Consumption and Production Round Table (RT) in the field of environmental information and communication to consumers. The event was organised by ANCC/COOP (Italy) and partners in the framework of the EU-funded 'PROMISE' (PROduct Main Impacts Sustainability through Eco-communication) project¹⁷.

Fair Trade

In 2011, Euro Coop continued its long-standing collaboration with the Fair Trade Advocacy Office, the main representation of the Fair Trade movements before the European institutions. In this framework, it took part in the works of the Fair Trade Working Group of the European Parliament (EP FT WG) on 4th May 2011. This WG, of which Euro Coop was one of the founding members in 2003, gathers Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and stakeholders with an interest in Fair Trade, with the goal of raising awareness about Fair Trade amongst the EU institutions and increasing the presence of Fair Trade products in the European Parliament's premises.



Since the beginning of 2011, Euro Coop is also a full member of the Cooperatives Europe Working Group (WG) on Development Policy. The WG met three times in 2011, and discussions revolved around the setting up of a strategic plan to promote co-operative values and principles within EU development policies. Euro Coop was an active participant, providing particular input regarding the inclusion of Fair Trade in all relevant policy areas.

¹⁵ http://www.food-scp.eu/files/ReportEnvComm_8Dec2011.pdf

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/industry/retail/issue_papers.htm

¹⁷ <http://www.lifepromise.it/Default.asp?lc=en>

Against this background, the Euro Coop SPWG delivered an update of the Euro Coop Declaration on Fair Trade's annex, thereby highlighting continuous commitment and progress on this most topical issue.

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)

In 2011, Euro Coop continued to follow the GMO dossier in conjunction with the Food Policy Working Group (FPWG). Throughout the year Euro Coop kept in contact with several NGOs working on the GMO dossier, including Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, with the aim of developing common positions on ad hoc subjects. In this respect, it contributed to the publication of two letters addressed to the European Parliament expressing concerns on labelling thresholds for the presence of GMOs in GMO-free seed¹⁸.



Organic farming

In 2011, Euro Coop continued to follow the work of the Technology Research Platform 'Organics'¹⁹, of which it is a member. In this context, Euro Coop also spoke at the conference "Sustainable food chains for a European Strategy and Action plan towards a sustainable knowledge-based bio-economy by 2020", held in Brussels on 22nd June 2011.

In addition, Euro Coop, through its expert from the Swedish Kooperativa Förbundet, Per Baumann, contributed to the work of the European Commission Advisory Group on Organic Farming.

Sustainable fishing

During 2011, Euro Coop continued to work in the framework of the Alliance for a Sustainable Common Fishery Reform, formed by WWF, AIPCE (the European Fish Processing Association), EuroCommerce and Euro Toques (the Association of European Chefs). Together with the members of the Alliance, Euro Coop participated in the roundtable "Europeans want sustainable fish - How to respond to consumer demand & maximise value throughout the supply chain?" on 4th May 2011, which featured the intervention of the Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Maria Damanaki. On that occasion, Euro Coop underlined that a growing number of consumers across Europe want sustainably supplied fish and that a strong reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) based on strict environmental criteria as well as on strengthened relationships throughout the whole supply chain is needed to meet such expectations.



¹⁸ http://www.eurocoop.coop/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=390%3Avote-on-draft-report-of-george-lyon-15-march-gmo-free-seed&catid=41%3Aenvironmental-policy&Itemid=193&lang=en and http://www.eurocoop.coop/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=396%3Avote-on-draft-report-of-corinne-lepage-12-april-freedom-of-choice-depends-on-gmo-free-seed&catid=41%3Aenvironmental-policy&Itemid=193&lang=en

¹⁹ <http://www.tporganics.eu/index.php/members.html>

On 16th May 2011, Euro Coop and Coop Sweden then jointly published on the CFP Reform Watch website²⁰ the article “The traceability of fish products needs to improve”²¹, centred on the need to carry out a CFP reform focusing on sustainability criteria and to strengthen the traceability of fish and fish products to the benefit of consumer choice.

On 24th November 2011, Euro Coop, along with other retailers, met again with Commissioner Damanaki to discuss proposed reforms to the CFP. The meeting was the occasion to underline the need to take into greater consideration consumer concerns when shaping fishing policies, with particular emphasis on an enhanced traceability, and to present the new brochure of the Alliance²². This new brochure features the key asks of the Alliance to implement a sustainable CFP reform, like tackling discards and delivering a sustainable aquaculture.

Waste

On 16th June 2011, Euro Coop launched the position paper “Towards a Zero Waste Society: a Euro Coop perspective”²³. The document, which was elaborated by the Euro Coop SPWG, highlights European consumer co-operatives’ awareness of the unsustainable situation generated by raising waste levels in modern societies and illustrates concrete actions which are already in place to tackle it.

Euro Coop then submitted on 8th August 2011 a reply to the EC consultation on options to reduce the use of plastic bags. The position, which was also elaborated by the Euro Coop SPWG, acknowledged the need to reduce the use of plastic bags, but underlined the necessity to frame any action in a broader policy of waste minimisation centred on implementing the waste hierarchy “reduce, reuse, recycle and recover”. The position on the EC consultation on options to reduce the use of plastic bags is available at the Euro Coop Secretariat upon request.

Additional considerations

Throughout the year, Euro Coop informed the SPWG about the main developments on the above-mentioned topics taking place both at EU and single consumer co-operative level. This task has been accomplished through a dedicated SPWG mailing list. In addition to that, several meetings with EU officials including MEPs have been carried out during the year to effectively put forward Euro Coop’s positions before the EU institutions. Euro Coop also attended several conferences and meetings with the same aim. Finally, the Secretariat took care of responding to *ad hoc* questions and requests arising from the SPWG members regarding sustainability-related issues as to provide them with a tailor-made service.

²⁰ www.CFP-reformwatch.eu

²¹ <http://www.cfp-reformwatch.eu/2011/05/%E2%80%9Cthe-traceability-of-fish-products-needs-to-improve%E2%80%9D/>

²² http://www.eurocoop.coop/dmdocuments/position/environment/2011_11_Alliance_for_CFP_Reform_Brochure.pdf

²³ http://www.eurocoop.coop/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=414%3Atowards-a-zero-waste-society-a-euro-coop-perspective&catid=41%3Aenvironmental-policy&Itemid=193&lang=en

Consumer Policy

European Consumer Consultative Group

Euro Coop participated in all European Consumer Consultative Group (ECCG) meetings organised by the European Commission during the past year. National and European consumer organisation representatives exchanged views and opinions on improvements of the European consumer policy. In this respect, particular focus is being placed on the latest legislative proposals of the European Commission regarding Consumer Rights, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) as well as on the European Contract Law Project.

In addition, stakeholders have been invited to contribute to the preparation of the post-2013 Consumer Policy Strategy and Programme of Community Action/European Consumer Agenda. Euro Coop took this opportunity to advise the European Commission to redefine its eligible criteria to better account for the great diversity of consumer organisations that form the European consumer movement, including consumer co-operatives. In its written contribution²⁴, Euro Coop also stressed the importance of developing appropriate consumer information and educational tools to encourage consumers to adopt responsible and sustainable consumption behaviours, which could be achieved by promoting cooperation between stakeholders.

Last but not least, on 1st of December 2011, the ECCG focused on the review of the European Commission Sustainable Consumption Policy and Sustainable Industrial Policy Action Plan. On this occasion, Euro Coop restated its position that consumer co-operatives play an important role in promoting sustainable consumption patterns throughout the EU, thanks to their policies of consumer information and education.

European Consumer Summit

On 11th and 12th April 2011 in Brussels, Euro Coop participated in the 2011 European Consumer Summit²⁵ organised by the European Commission's Directorate for Health and Consumer Policy (DG SANCO) in Brussels. This event consisted of two days' worth of workshops addressing specific topics: consumer information, consumer education, alternative dispute resolution, participative enforcement, consumers and markets and capacity building in the consumer movement.

Based on their discussions during the workshops, the participants, which included representatives of national and European consumer organisations, businesses and public authorities, formulated conclusions and presented them to the European Commission at the end of the summit via six rapporteurs. Those conclusions should serve as the basis for the definition of the future European Consumer



²⁴ http://www.eurocoop.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=404%3Aeuro-coops-comments-on-the-consumer-policy-post-2013&catid=44%3Aconsumer-policy&Itemid=191&lang=en

²⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/events/ecs_2011/

Agenda - the next multiannual European strategy in the field of consumer policy to be published by the European Commission during the first semester of 2012.

Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue

On 20th and 21st June, Euro Coop participated in the 12th Transatlantic Consumer



Trans Atlantic
Consumer Dialogue

Dialogue (TACD)²⁶, which took place in Brussels. On 20th June, Euro Coop took part in a “consumer to consumer” meeting to discuss the proposed TACD resolution on the need for a mandatory reporting scheme and inventory for nanomaterials contained in consumer products.

Euro Coop encouraged increased consideration of Euro Coop members’ concerns, in particular the safety of food products, and called for labelling that would indicate to consumers the use of nanomaterials intentionally added to food products as well as the use of food contact nanomaterials, if any. This TACD resolution was then presented to governments and European Commission officials on 21st June.

The two-day meeting was also the occasion to discuss other issues like climate change, financial services, consumer privacy and data protection.

Collective redress

In 2011, Euro Coop, along with various consumer organisations, participated in a joint lobbying campaign targeted at the European Commission that aimed to encourage the definition of an EU-wide collective redress mechanism that would respect general common principles.

To reach this goal, Euro Coop, along with the other organisations involved in the process, first contributed to the European Commission public consultation on collective redress launched in February. Based on their previous exchange of views at the beginning of the year, Euro Coop and the other stakeholders agreed on detailing joint arguments in their written contributions in favour of an EU-wide collective redress mechanism. Their focus was on the need to implement a common instrument that would ensure the equal and effective application of consumers’ fundamental rights within the European Union. Euro Coop’s submitted its response²⁷ in April 2011.



In addition, on 5th April, Euro Coop intervened in a public hearing on collective redress that took place in the European Parliament in Brussels. In the presence of officials from the European Commission and the European Parliament, Euro Coop took the floor to call for the definition of a European collective redress mechanism to be based on general common rules.

²⁶ <http://www.tacd.org/>

²⁷ http://www.eurocoop.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=403%3Apublic-consultation-towards-a-coherent-european-approach-to-collective-redress&catid=44%3Aconsumer-policy&Itemid=191&lang=en

On 30th May, Euro Coop, along with a dozen European associations such as BEUC (European Consumers' Organisation), Friends of Europe, COFACE (Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union) and the European Environmental Bureau, sent a joint letter, entitled "Lost in consultation – Concrete action on collective redress needed"²⁸, to the European Commission Vice-President Viviane Reding, the EU's Justice Commissioner, entreating her to take "concrete action" after "numerous consultations" failed to produce results.

Euro Coop will continue to monitor the collective redress dossier in 2012, particularly the European Parliament's own initiative report on Collective Redress and ADR issued by the JURI committee. This document should indeed be used by the European Commission as a basis for further policy discussion on this dossier.

Summit on Alternative Dispute Resolution

On the 16th of March 2011, Euro Coop attended the Summit on Alternative Dispute Resolution which took place in the European Parliament in Brussels. This summit offers stakeholders the opportunity to exchange views on supporting the wider use of Alternative Dispute Resolution schemes in the European Union. In 2012 Euro Coop will closely monitor the expected political debates on the European Commission legislative proposals package on ADR and ODR, which was published in November 2011. This dossier is indeed a priority for the 2012 Danish EU Presidency.

Consumer Rights Directive

During the past year, particular focus has been given to the final discussions of the new EU Consumer Rights Directive which was formally adopted by member states in the EU Council of Ministers and published in the Official Journal of the European Union in October 2011.

In January, Euro Coop sent to the European Parliament's Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee a statement to defend the legal implementation of the final seller right of redress in the proposed Directive on Consumer Rights. At the end, after almost three years of complex negotiations, EU institutions adopted a compromise text that focused on distance and online sales.

²⁸ http://www.eurocoop.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=413%3Aletter-lost-in-consultation-concrete-action-on-collective-redress-needed&catid=44%3Aconsumer-policy&Itemid=191&lang=en

CO-OPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

Cooperatives Europe

In 2011, Euro Coop continued its membership to Cooperatives Europe and therefore its participation in the different structures of the organisation, including the General Assembly and Board. Euro



Coop was active in the European Union Coordination Committee (EUCC) and its different working groups thus dealing with several topics of interest to the whole of the European co-operative movement.

Euro Coop participated in two Cooperatives Europe Working Groups (the Development Policy Working Group and the Energy Policy Expert Working Group) and meetings of the European sector organisations to discuss EU-level preparations for IYC 2012.

International Co-operative Alliance and Consumer Co-operatives Worldwide

Euro Coop continued to provide secretariat support for Consumer Co-operatives Worldwide (CCW), the international sector organisation for consumer co-operatives, and participated in the Sector Organisations Liaison Committee (SOLG).



Representatives from Euro Coop also attended the 2011 ICA Governance Committee and Board meetings and the ICA General Assembly in Cancún, Mexico in November 2011.

MEMBERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

General Assembly and Board meetings

The General Assembly met on 16th June in Sofia, Bulgaria, where they approved the 2010 activity and financial reports, the 2012 budget and the 2012 membership fees. The delegates also discussed Euro Coop's activities for the International Year of Co-operatives. On 24th November, the General Assembly convened in an extraordinary session to approve the membership application of UKOOPSPILKA (Ukraine).

Euro Coop's Board of Directors met twice in 2011: on 23rd March and 24th November, both at the offices of Copa-Cogeca in Brussels. They discussed the administration of the organisation, the reports developed within the Working Groups and political topics such as the European Retail Action Plan and the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Supply Chain.

Membership

The General Assembly approved the membership of UKOOPSPILKA (Ukraine) to take effect in 2012.

Euro Coop Working Groups

Euro Coop continued work within its three Working Groups: Food Retail, Sustainability Policy and Co-operative Identity.

The Food Retail Working Group met on 15th June in Sofia, Bulgaria and focussed on food labelling and health and nutrition. The WG decided to undertake a report compiling member's initiatives to fight obesity in Europe.

The Sustainability Policy Working Group met three times, on 14th April in Brussels, 30th June in St Petersburg and 3rd October in Brussels. The WG primarily focussed on genetically modified organisms (GMOs), food waste, the 2011 report on the project "Consumer Co-operatives and Climate Change: Taking the Challenge Forward", the reduction of plastic carrier bags, the Retail Forum, the Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Round Table and "eco-labels".

The Co-operative Identity Working Group held three meetings in 2011, on 3rd March in Brussels, 8th June in Stockholm and 18th October in Brussels. In addition to sharing their co-operative best practices, members completed the report on members' participation, collaborated on the database compiling co-operative laws and taxation, finalised the report on mergers and acquisitions, developed Euro Coop's IYC 2012 activities and discussed local community strategies.

Presidency

The Presidency of Euro Coop met three times in Brussels in 2011, on 18th February, 25th May and 25th October.

Social responsibility

As a representative of the co-operative movement, Euro Coop incorporates into its activities social responsibility criteria and the ICA's social responsibility indicators. These considerations affect Euro Coop in the following areas: people, products, environment and democracy.

People

The secretariat maintained a stable and friendly working environment throughout 2011, and strictly followed all labour-related Belgium regulations on safety, health, employment and social rights. All interns develop their internship within the framework of an agreement between Euro Coop and their university and are covered by insurance and a monthly allowance.

Products

Regarding its purchases, the secretariat privileges environmentally-friendly products, including organic foods (e.g. catering for meetings), Fair Trade tea and eco-labelled detergents and paper. The secretariat will progressively change its suppliers according to these criteria when possible.

Environment

In 2011, Euro Coop maintained its agreement with the Belgian NGO Compenco2 and committed to offset carbon emissions of all the travelling of its staff.



Recyclable materials (paper, plastic and glass) are collected separately and sent for recycling.

The purchase of electric and electronic equipment favoured energy efficient options and appliances are turned off when not in use.

Democracy

Euro Coop is a democratic organisation following the cooperative tradition of "one member, one vote" independently of the individual's financial contributions. This principle applies to all of its governance structures involving members.

COMMUNICATIONS

Publications

Newsletter

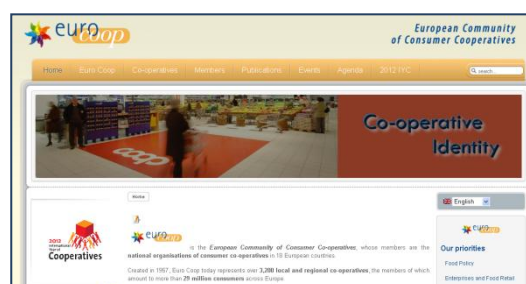
In 2011, Euro Coop produced eleven editions of Euro Coop Flash, its monthly newsletter to members. The newsletters were made available in English, French and Italian and contained updates on the Euro Coop policy areas and member activities.

Policy-focused publications

Euro Coop published a variety of position papers, reports, speeches, letters and press releases related to developments in food, enterprise, sustainability and consumer policies. These documents are available on the Euro Coop website.

Website

Euro Coop maintained its website and further enhanced content available in French and Italian. Members used their private login information to access restricted content, such as the Euro Coop Flash newsletter, meeting documents and member-only reports.



Conferences and workshops

On 23rd March 2011, Euro Coop teamed up with the ICA and Cooperatives Europe to host the workshop “Consumer Co-operatives’ Contribution to the International Year of Co-operatives 2012” in Brussels. The event highlighted the ICA preparations for the IYC 2012 on both global and European levels, as well as the specific IYC initiatives of consumer co-operatives.

In celebration of the European Union Sustainable Energy Week, Euro Coop organised the conference “Boosting Renewable Energy Supply and In-Store Energy Efficiency”, which took place on 13th April 2011 in Brussels. The conference featured presentations from the EU institutions and representatives of environmental NGOs regarding a low carbon economy and case studies of practical examples from Euro Coop members.

Coinciding with the Euro Coop General Assembly on 16th June in Sofia, Bulgaria, the workshop “Coop Brand Food Products: a Guarantee for Health and Safety” was an opportunity for members to share and debate practices for developing own brand products.

Rounding out the year was the Consumer Co-operative Forum, which was held in London on 29th and 30th September 2011. The two-day event offered attendees the chance to discuss their strategies for the IYC 2012, network with one another and exchange best practices for

improving their co-operative businesses. Co-operative leaders spoke on topics such as competition, differentiation, sustainability and member involvement.

Euro Coop in the media

In 2011, Euro Coop received press coverage from national media, European press outlets and industry-specific publications regarding its positions and policy work.

WHO'S WHO

General Assembly delegates

President

Aldo Soldi, ANCC/COOP (IT)

Vice Presidents

Thomas Bagge Olesen, FDB (DK) and Dr. Zoltán Zs. Zsóke, Coop AFEOSZ (HU)

Delegates

Pavlos Aristidou, ESEL-SPOLP Ltd (CY)

Leire Barañano, Hispacoop (ES)

Fred Bosch, Coop Nederland (NL)

Duncan Bowdler, The Co-operative Group (UK)

José Luis Cabrita, FENACOOPT (PT)

Ioan Crisan, CENTROCOOP (RO)

Gabriel Csollar, COOP Jednota (SK)

Mathias Fiedler, ZdK (DE)

Zdeneck Juracka, Union of Czech and Moravian Consumer Co-operatives (CZ)

Kati Kusmin, ETK (EE)

Leif Linde, KF (SE)

Anne Santamäki, SOK (FI)

Petar Stefanov, Central Co-operative Union (BG)

Nils Arild Steigedal, Coop Norge SA (NO)

Working Group members

Food Retail Working Group

Chair: Vittorio Ramazza, Coop Italia (IT)

Anna-Lena Dahlberg, Coop Inköp och Kategori AB (SE)

Tor Helge Gundersen, Coop Norge SA (NO)

Cathryn Higgs, The Co-operative Group (UK)

Inaki Larrabeiti, Eroski (ES)

Maria Joao Lima, FENACOOPT (PT)

Joan Preisler, FDB (DK)

Lea Rankinen, SOK (FI)

Thomas Roland, FDB (DK)

Francesca Woodhouse, The Co-operative Group (UK)

Sustainability Policy Working Group

Chair: Duncan Bowdler, The Co-operative Group (UK)

Gotzone Artabe Larraskitu, Eroski (ES)

Per Baumann, Coop Sverige AB (SE)

Nevena Bukova, Central Co-operative Union (BG)

Carla Espada, FENACCOOP (PT)

Signe D. Frese, FDB (DK)

Juhani Ilmola, SOK (FI)

Knut Lutnaes, Coop Norge SA (NO)

Francesco Russo, ANCC/COOP (IT)

Co-operative Identity Working Group

Chair: Russell Gill, The Co-operative Group (UK)

Riccardo Bagni, ANCC/COOP (IT)

Farnoush Bejnoud, ZdK (DE)

Kjetil Bull, Coop Norge SA (NO)

Staffan Eklund, KF (SE)

Patricia Gomes, FENACCOOP (PT)

Felix Martin, Hispacoop (ES)

Helena Raininko, SOK (FI)

Diana Tzakova, Central Co-operative Union (BG)

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

BULGARIA



C.C.U.

Central Cooperative Union
Rakovsky Street 99
BG -1000 Sofia
www.ccu-bg.com

CYPRUS



ESEL-SPOLP LTD

Union of Limassol Co-operative Societies and
Co-operative Supply Organisation of Limassol-Paphos
Achaion 4 -3022 Limassol
P.O. Box 50311
CY-3603 Limassol
www.eands.com.cy

CZECH REPUBLIC



Union of Czech and Moravian Consumer Cooperatives

U Rajske zahrady 3/1912
CZ - 130 00 Prague 3
www.scmsd.cz

DENMARK



FDB

Faellesfoeningen for Danmarks Brugsforeninger
Vallensbæk Torvevej 9
Dk-2620 Albertslund
www.fdb.dk

ESTONIA



ETK

Eesti Tarbijateühistute Keskühistu
Kalda 7c
EE-11625 Tallinn
www.etk.ee

FINLAND



SOK Corporation

Suomen Osuuskauppojen Keskuskunta
Street address : Fleminginkatu 34, Helsinki Finland
Mailing address : P.O.Box 1, FIN 00088 S Group, Finland
www.s-kanava.fi

GERMANY



ZdK

Zentralverband deutscher Konsumgenossenschaften e.V.
Baumeisterstraße 2
DE-20099 Hamburg
www.zdk.coop

HUNGARY



ÁFEOSZ

National Federation of Consumer Co-operatives and Trade Associations (CO-OP HUNGARY)
Könyves Kálmán körút 11.
HU-1097 Budapest
www.afeosz.hu

<p>ITALY</p> 	<p>ANCC-COOP Associazione Nazionale Cooperative di Consumatori-COOP Via Guattani, 9 Palazzo delle Associazioni di settori, piano 4 IT-00161 Roma www.e-coop.it</p>
<p>NETHERLANDS</p> 	<p>Coop Nederland u.a. Postbox 87 NL-6880 AB Velp www.coop.nl</p>
<p>NORWAY</p> 	<p>Coop Norge SA. Box 1173 Sentrum NO-0107 Oslo www.coop.no</p>
<p>PORTUGAL</p> 	<p>FENACOOP Federação Nacional Das Cooperativas de Consumidores, FCRL Av. Santos Dumont, 57, 2º. Esq PT- 1050-202 Lisboa www.consumo-pt.coop/</p>
<p>ROMANIA</p> 	<p>CENTROCOOP National Union of Consumer Co-operatives 46-48 Calea Plevnei Sector 1, RO-010233 Bucharest www.centrocoop.com</p>
<p>SLOVAK REPUBLIC</p> 	<p>COOP Jednota Slovensko, s.d Slovenská republika sd, Bajkalská 25 SK - 827 18 Bratislava www.coop.sk</p>
<p>SPAIN</p> 	<p>HISPACOOP Confederacion Espanola de Cooperativas de Consumidores y Usuarios Calle Vallehermoso 15, 1º ES-28015 Madrid www.hispacoop.es</p>
<p>SWEDEN</p> 	<p>KF Kooperativa Förbundet P.O. Box 15200 SE-10465 Stockholm 15 www.kf.se</p>
<p>UNITED KINGDOM</p> 	<p>The Co-operative Group New Century House P.O. Box 53 UK - Manchester M60 4ES www.co-operative.coop</p>