

A cooperative manifesto



Cooperative policy
priorities for
2014 European
Parliament elections



Cooperatives Europe is the voice of cooperative enterprises in Europe. Representing 90 member organisations from 35 European countries, we advocate for a level playing field between cooperatives and other forms of enterprise. We work to increase the knowledge of the cooperative business model across Europe and to facilitate the development of cooperative enterprises.

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Euro Coop unites 20 national organizations of consumer cooperatives across Europe. Created in 1957, today we represent over 4,500 local and regional businesses, which serve 30 million consumers, employ 450,000 citizens, and account for 36,000 stores, which register close to €76 billion annual turnover. Euro Coop is the consumer cooperatives sector of Cooperatives Europe.

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Policy Priorities for the 2014 European Elections

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Cooperatives in Europe

Cooperatives create a diverse European economy, contribute to business start-ups and growth, and generate jobs and wealth.

Cooperatives are businesses owned and run by their members. Whether the members are employees, customers or local communities, they are everyday people who have an equal say in what their business does and a share in the profits.

Cooperatives come in all shapes and sizes, from micro enterprises to multinationals. They operate in all parts of the economy: from healthcare to housing, farms to pharmacies, supermarkets to sports clubs, banks to bakeries, energy to education.





We want to work with you

Cooperatives Europe represents 160,000 businesses across Europe. Between them, Europe's cooperatives employ 5.4 million people and have 123 million members, meaning they are owned by one in five Europeans.

With such a large constituency, Cooperatives Europe is an active member of the European Parliament Social Economy Intergroup. In 2013 the EU Parliament adopted a report recognising the positive role of cooperatives through the economic crisis.

Cooperatives Europe wants to build on this and work with MEPs to develop effective measures to strengthen Europe's economy.

Our vision of Europe

- A Europe that focuses on a real economy, serving people's needs and aspirations rather than financial markets.
- A Europe with a resilient and innovative economy that allows a diverse range of business models to flourish.
- A Europe in which young people are equipped to realise their entrepreneurial aspirations.
- A Europe with an environment that supports the start-up and growth of people-centered businesses.





Policy priorities

Following consultation with cooperatives across Europe, Cooperatives Europe would like to work with MEPs to develop three concrete measures.

Together these measures can deliver important policy objectives: a more resilient economy, youth employment and business start-ups and growth.

1 A supportive EU policy framework for cooperatives

To create a resilient and diverse economy, the European Union and its member states need a regulatory environment that allows different business forms to develop on a level playing field.

As distinct member-owned rather than investor-owned businesses, legislation makes it harder for cooperative businesses to raise capital and for people to start and run a cooperative.

Cooperatives Europe would like to work with MEPs to revise the EU's 'one-size-fits-all' approach and develop measures that will make it as easy to start, run and grow a cooperative as any other business.

2 Increase cooperative awareness amongst younger people

With younger people increasingly interested in socially responsible business, youth employment in Europe would benefit if younger people's knowledge of cooperatives and other innovative business models was developed.

The teaching of entrepreneurship in schools, colleges and universities across member states is, however, focused on conventional business models.

Cooperatives Europe would like to work with MEPs to put in place policies that encourage educational institutions in member states to include the cooperative model in their curricula.

3 A cooperative roadmap to support business start-ups and growth

To create an environment in which people can start and grow different forms of business, entrepreneurs require appropriate education, finance and business support.

The European Commission last year established a permanent cooperative working group. Working with the Commission, the group is developing a 'cooperative roadmap', to be presented in 2014, to support cooperative start-ups and growth.

Cooperatives Europe would like MEPs to support the cooperative roadmap and assist in its implementation in the forthcoming legislative period.



Talk to Cooperatives Europe

Cooperatives Europe is keen to discuss with candidates to the European Parliament how our suggested measures to strengthen Europe's economy can be developed and implemented.

Candidates can contact and talk to Cooperatives Europe's Director directly on the details below:

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Photography *Ceux qui aiment les lundis. Travailler en Scop*
Jean-Robert Dantou / CG Scop / Picturertank

Cooperatives Europe

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Representing 90 member organisations from 35 European countries, we advocate for a level playing field between cooperatives and other forms of enterprise.

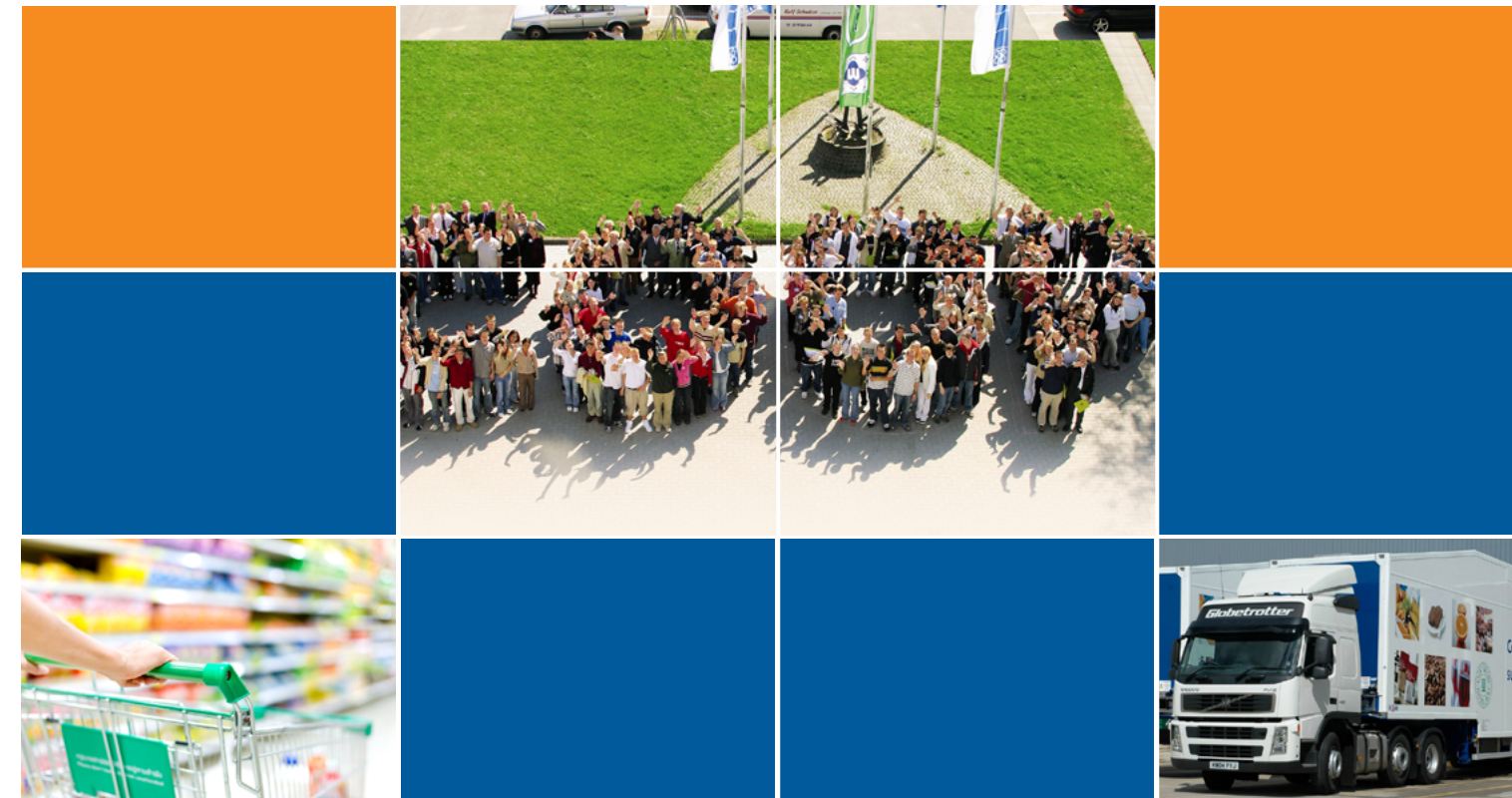
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Search for Cooperatives Europe on   

European Community of Consumer Cooperatives Policy Priorities for the 2014 European Elections



We engage consumers for sustainable growth

The EU faces a major challenge in providing a future of sustainable growth of economic, social, and environmental dimensions, so as to ensure that present development does not undermine the future of the next generations.

Consumer cooperatives can contribute because:

- we are values-driven retail enterprises;
- we are democratically-owned and governed by our consumer-members;
- we inform and educate consumers towards more sustainable consumption;
- we are Europe's second biggest retail force, and are thus in a privileged position to influence the supply chain;
- we have a long-term vision on profitability;
- we are striving towards a true, coherent and ambitious sustainable EU Food Policy.

Consumer cooperatives help build a sustainable food chain

Euro Coop unites 20 national organizations of consumer cooperatives across Europe. Created in 1957, today we represent over 4,500 local and regional businesses, which service 30 million consumers, employ 450,000 citizens, and account for 36,000 stores, which register close to €76 billion annual turnover.

Euro Coop is a sector of Cooperatives Europe.

Our contribution is through:

- providing safe and quality food at affordable prices;
- sourcing and marketing food sustainably;
- acting to prevent and reduce food waste;
- working towards fairer trade relations across the supply chain;
- countering climate change in an effective and structured manner;
- working towards stable and quality employment;
- fighting for a strong and balanced consumer policy.

Part of the cooperative movement, part of Europe

Our vision and policy priorities are fully aligned with Cooperatives Europe. Meanwhile, our specific nature calls on the EU institutions to:

- In legislation, recognize consumer cooperatives as drivers of sustainability;
- Promote a strong and balanced consumer policy, where consumers feel protected, safe, and confident;
- Establish a EU Food Policy that sets the global standards and protects European businesses in the retail sector;
- Build a EU food system able to tackle the challenge of sustainable growth;
- Engage consumers towards sustainable consumption patterns for Europe's economic, social and financial growth;
- Foster the creation and development of consumer cooperatives by applying policies to support their activity and specific business model (e.g. retail policy, competition, funding).

Euro Coop is ready to talk to all interested Parliament candidate members and any interested stakeholders.

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