



2024-2025  
Annual Report

# Cooperatives Build a Better World



International Year  
of Cooperatives

Cooperatives Build  
a Better World



## Welcome message: A spotlight on cooperatives

2025 marks the second UN International Year of Cooperatives – a moment of global recognition, but also a call to step up. Across Europe and beyond, cooperatives are in the spotlight. This year has been about seizing that opportunity – unlocking the full potential of the cooperative model, demonstrating its far-reaching added value, and preparing to carry that momentum into the year ahead. Our efforts in 2024 paid off. During the European Parliament elections campaign, we grew the Coop Supporters network and placed cooperatives firmly on the agenda for the next EU political cycle. We amplified the cooperative difference with the renewal of the ICA–EU Framework Partnership, which initiated a major step to strengthen and expand the

cooperative model worldwide.

In July, we joined representatives of the global cooperative movement and national ambassadors to celebrate the official soft launch of the International Year of Cooperatives at the United Nations Headquarters in New York under the global slogan “Cooperatives build a better world”. In November, we took part in the official launch at the ICA Global Cooperative Conference in New Delhi to mark this milestone.

In Europe, one of our main priorities for 2024 was to work closely with youth and cooperative leaders. The European Youth Cooperative Forum “Youth & Cooperative Governance” in Sofia brought over 30 young cooperators from 11 European countries together. It focused on the challenges and opportunities to establish career paths for young cooperators and their inclusion in the management of cooperatives. A resolution was adopted, laying out the intentions for the future of the YECN.

Another priority was organising

an event gathering the leaders of Europe’s cooperatives – the first such forum since 2012. The Cooperative Leadership Forum ‘The Coop Model 2030 – Challenges & Solutions’ in Brussels opened vital discussions with over 60 cooperative leaders from more than 30 organisations on the future of the sustainable cooperative model towards 2030, such as the importance of data as a tool for a successful strategy, and the necessity of education and training of the next generation of coop managers and leaders, ensuring success by 2050.

In Sofia, we held the first task force discussion with academy representatives among board members on making cooperative education a priority, to establish a Cooperative Academy – an international hybrid programme for the training of cooperative experts and leaders with the participation of various universities, colleges and research institutes. Our work culminated in the European Conference: ‘Cooperatives as Drivers of Change’ in Brussels, which brought together hundreds of cooperators,

policymakers, researchers, and business leaders to explore the impact of the movement on Europe's socio-economic future.

As the European region of the ICA, we also strengthened cooperation through the Global Cooperative House in Brussels, working alongside the ICA and European sectoral cooperative organisations, CECOP/CICOPA and Euro Coop with one voice, one vision, and a shared strategic horizon.

Our full calendar of activities reflects a clear message: the cooperative model is gaining recognition, not only for what it is, but for what it can become. There is plenty of potential and opportunities, so we have our work set for ourselves. Of course, challenges remain. But with a shared sense of purpose and stronger collaboration with our national member organisations, scaled up with cooperation across sectors, ICA regions, and countries, we can shape a cooperative movement ready for 2030 and beyond.

The spotlight remains where it belongs: on people-first, competitive enterprises building a fairer, more sustainable Europe.

We wish you a pleasant read.

**Warm regards,**

**Prof. Petar Stefanov**  
President, Cooperatives Europe

**Agnes Mathis**  
Director, Cooperatives Europe





Our members

71

Countries

32

Cooperatives

250.000

Employees

5m

Members

141m

# The voice of cooperative enterprises in Europe



# 1

## Coming together in a Changing Europe

The 2024 European Elections were more than a political milestone; they served as a powerful reminder of the need to champion our values, particularly as we confront growing authoritarianism and the unease created by conflict. These turbulent times challenge the very foundations of solidarity, cross-border cooperation, and shared progress that cooperatives stand for. Yet, they also offer an opportunity: to reinvent, adapt, and lead. In this climate, cooperation is more than a model—it has become a necessity.

As we look ahead, the recognition of 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives inspires optimism and collective energy. Together, we are ready to embrace the future with strength and optimism. While emerging

social, economic, and environmental challenges reshape the continent, cooperativism stands out as a forward-looking approach rooted in democratic governance, collective ownership, and long-term sustainability. Cooperatives offer a powerful response to shifting realities, proving that collaboration and solidarity remain key drivers of inclusive progress and competitiveness in Europe.

### 1.1 Bringing cooperators together

The European economic and political landscape evolves at a rapid pace. Cooperatives are right in the middle. We actively engage youth, leaders, policymakers, academics, and practitioners to ensure they remain relevant, resilient and future-ready. Their diverse perspectives but shared commitment to cooperative values are essential in building a common vision that addresses today's complex challenges.

In 2024–2025, Cooperatives Europe placed a strong emphasis on creating in-person opportunities to foster meaningful dialogue and collaboration across generations and sectors.

One such occasion was held in Sofia on 1 October 2024, when around 30 young cooperators from across 11 different countries convened for the European Youth Cooperative Forum – Youth & Cooperative Governance. Co-organised by the Central Cooperative Union of Bulgaria and Cooperatives Europe, the event provided a dynamic space for young voices to reflect on the future of cooperative leadership and governance. The forum culminated in the signing of a declaration of commitment to strengthening the cooperative movement through active participation in the Young European Cooperators Network (YECN). As a key outcome, participants pledged to develop a participatory roadmap to establish YECN as an official, autonomous body working closely with Cooperatives Europe.

Similarly, the Cooperative Leadership



Forum, hosted by Cooperatives Europe on 17 March in Brussels, offered a unique platform for experienced cooperators and cooperative leaders to come together—not as passive attendees, but as co-creators of strategy and purpose. Through open dialogue and collaborative thinking, the forum aimed to ensure the movement remains innovative, resilient, and aligned with Europe's broader economic and social goals. Only by fostering cross-generational and cross-sectoral exchange can the cooperative model continue to grow as a force for sustainable, inclusive progress.

Of course, as a team, Cooperatives Europe ensured strong participation in external events as well. We reconnected with the French agricultural movement Coopération Agricole, represented the European movement at the Legacoop conference in Brussels, joined the Energy Communities Forum in Kraków, took part in the SME Assembly in Budapest, and even brought the spirit of cooperation to the European

Parliament with Bohemian Football Club — among many other moments of meaningful engagement throughout the year.

## 1.2 Mobilising the Coop Supporters network - #coops4europe

The European elections of June 2024 represented a pivotal moment in the EU political landscape, with a renewal of political leadership, changes in the composition of the European Parliament, and shifts in priorities on the political agenda. Cooperatives Europe seized the opportunity to establish new foundations for future collaborations with the new decision-makers and to ensure that cooperatives' priorities were at the forefront of discussions.

Cooperatives Europe has met with more than a dozen newly elected or re-elected Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) over the last eight months as part of a campaign and outreach strategy that was developed a year ago and is still ongoing.



The strategy has led to an expansion of our #CoopSupporter network, an informal forum for exchange between MEPs and the cooperative movement. This network counts MEPs who share our vision of a European economy that puts people before profit, who support the cooperative business model, and who are committed to achieving our manifesto priorities. These allies will prove invaluable in our advocacy and policy work during this mandate.





### 1.3 The International Year of Cooperatives 2025

In 2025, the global cooperative movement marks a major milestone: the second United Nations International Year of Cooperatives (IYC). Cooperatives Europe has been actively involved in this initiative from the start, working closely with the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), our members, and regional partners to highlight the role of cooperatives in building a fairer and more sustainable world.

The UN International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) 2025 was officially launched in New Delhi in November 2024, with a soft launch event preceding it at the UN Headquarters in New York.

Cooperatives Europe joined the celebrations on site, and partners from across Europe were present to show strong support and represent the European cooperative voice. The event brought together hundreds of cooperative leaders worldwide and served as a platform to reaffirm our

shared values and collective vision.

Throughout the year, we have remained closely involved in shaping and promoting the IYC agenda in Europe. We collaborate regularly with ICA's regional offices to align efforts and encourage European members to engage in the campaign. We provide guidance on how to use communication materials, share updates through our networks, and offer visibility for member-led initiatives under the IYC banner.

At the same time, we are working on co-developing campaigns that reflect the cooperative contribution to sustainable development, digital transformation, and social resilience—themes central to the EU's own policy priorities. As the year progresses, we remain committed to helping our members make the most of the visibility and momentum that the IYC 2025 brings. It is a unique opportunity to strengthen awareness of the cooperative model, both within and beyond our movement.

This year culminated with a large gathering of hundreds of policymakers, cooperators and actors of the social economy at an event organised by the

European Commission and co-hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee, CECOP and Cooperatives Europe. Cooperatives Europe also developed a video explaining the role of Cooperatives Europe in connecting the cooperative movement across the continent and advocating for their interests.



# 2

## Cooperatives and the Economy in Transition

### 2.1 Promoting entrepreneurship

Cooperatives are not exceptions, nor are they confined to niche sectors. They are a vital part of the wider economy and must be fully considered in entrepreneurship policies, while remaining part of the social economy. This year, our mandate in the European Commission's Social Economy expert group (GECES) was renewed. We also strengthened our collaboration with Social Economy Europe to promote supportive policies for the social economy. Notably, efforts to renew the European Parliament's Social Economy Intergroup were successful. Cooperatives Europe contributed to the Commission's "Social Economy Voices" campaign, where we showcased how cooperatives support Europe's economy and society.

Cooperatives Europe ensured that EU strategies reflect cooperatives' specific needs. This year's focus included the Single Market Strategy 2025, the Startup/Scaleup Strategy, and simplification efforts such as the revision of the Public Procurement Directives and the Omnibus packages. By working with other organisations, we advanced our priorities. A recent example is our joint call, alongside six European organisations and business networks, to support business transfers.

*Expert groups:*

#### **The SME Envoy Network**

The SME Envoy is a high-level expert network made up of representatives from EU Member States (SME ambassadors), business organisations, and the European Commission. Cooperatives Europe is an active participant. The SME Envoy serves as a policy advisory group on issues affecting SMEs.

This year's discussions reflected the priorities of the new Commission,

with a focus on competitiveness, reindustrialisation, and the development of new technologies. Key topics included the Single Market strategy, better regulation, crisis preparedness, startup and scale-up policy, and competitive entrepreneurship. Cooperatives Europe also called for simplified regulations that offer legal clarity and predictability for businesses.

Cooperatives Europe has consistently highlighted two core messages: first, that cooperatives are competitive businesses; second, that they need a level playing field to fully realise their potential.

The network also offers Cooperatives Europe an opportunity to connect and coordinate with other business organisations and Member State representatives.

#### **GECES**

The Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises (GECES), which includes social economy experts and Member State representatives, began

its new six-year mandate at the end of 2024. Its main priorities include the mid-term review of the Social Economy Action Plan and the work of four thematic groups: socially responsible procurement, access to finance, transition, and data and statistics. Cooperatives Europe will contribute to these working groups alongside other social economy stakeholders and national representatives. GECEs also functions as a coordination platform, particularly relevant now, as the European Commission's Social Economy Unit is expected to be discontinued.

## **2.2 Levelling the playing field: an economy in transition**

In collaboration with our members, Cooperatives Europe has worked to secure a level playing field for cooperatives in several draft regulations. The issues addressed include taxation, public procurement, access to finance, and certification in the social economy—all of which could have a significant impact on

cooperatives. Across these topics, Cooperatives Europe uses its presence in expert groups and policy platforms to advocate for our members' interests.

### **Fit for Future Platform**

As part of the Fit for Future Platform—a high-level expert group that supports the European Commission in simplifying existing EU laws—Cooperatives Europe contributed to several reports, advocating for regulations that respect the specific structures of cooperatives. With the support of EACB, we reviewed draft reports, including the one on sustainability-related disclosures in the financial services sector and on unnecessary reporting obligations. Cooperatives Europe also put forward several suggestions for promoting and implementing the platform's recommendations.

### **SBA Follow-up Meetings**

The Small Business Act (SBA) Follow-up meetings provide a key platform for dialogue between business organisations and representatives of

the European Commission working on the internal market, entrepreneurship, and SMEs (DG GROW). Several ongoing files were addressed through this platform, including the SME Relief Package, the revision of the Public Procurement Directives, the new European Innovation Agenda, the mid-term evaluation of InvestEU, and data spaces for SMEs. Cooperatives Europe advocated for support measures that are accessible to all cooperatives, continued SME-targeted funding, and dedicated earmarking in the EU budget. Cooperatives Europe also called for simplified regulations that offer legal clarity and predictability for businesses.

### **SCE Regulation**

As part of the Social Economy Action Plan, the European Commission published a report on the use of the European Cooperative Statute Regulation. Cooperatives Europe contributed by gathering inputs and concrete data from its members and by participating in a preparatory workshop organised by the Commission, where

we presented recommendations to improve the use of this legal tool.

### **Sustainability Reporting and Simplification Efforts**

Cooperatives Europe continued its work on sustainability reporting, in line with the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D). Following the release of the voluntary SME reporting standards (VSME), Cooperatives Europe joined the SME Forum in 2025. This Forum aims to support market acceptance of the VSME by raising awareness, providing feedback on tools and support guides, and promoting best practices and knowledge exchange. Cooperatives Europe is working to raise awareness of the VSME among its members and to share support materials and tools that can assist cooperatives in their reporting process.

### **2.3 Civil society & Neighbourhood: building bridges**

The role of Cooperatives Europe is not

to treat EU and non-EU cooperative movements as isolated silos, but to use every opportunity to build bridges and promote the cooperative model wherever it exists. Our involvement in EESC civil society actions supports this goal.

### **Bilateral Civil Society Platforms with Candidate Countries**

Cooperatives Europe is a member of the EESC Civil Society Platforms with Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine. These platforms offer a space for dialogue between EESC members and civil society organisations from the respective countries. They allow civil society on both sides to monitor the reform processes and make recommendations to public authorities.

Cooperatives Europe plays a dual role:

1. Highlighting cooperative and community-based initiatives as key to building partnerships between the EU and Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine;
2. Informing participating civil society organisations about shared challenges

with cooperatives and how they can be addressed collectively.

### **EESC Civil Society Liaison Group**

As a member of the EESC Civil Society Liaison Group, Cooperatives Europe takes part in the annual Civil Society Week and co-organises a workshop as part of the programme. For the 2025 edition, held on 19 March, we co-organised a session on affordable, democratic, and sustainable housing, in collaboration with ALDA, the International Union of Tenants, and Generation Climate Europe.

Cooperatives Europe showcased student cooperative housing as a democratic, community-based solution to Europe's housing crisis, with the participation of the European Student Cooperative Housing Alliance (ESCHA). The workshop also welcomed MEP Leila Chaibi (France, HOUS Committee) and EESC member Baiba Miltovica (TEN Section).



### **SME Assembly 2024**

At the 2024 SME Assembly in Budapest, Cooperatives Europe hosted a workshop on the proximity economy—one of the 14 industrial ecosystems identified by the European Commission as key to Europe's resilience and competitiveness. The session followed the release of a Commission study and brought together speakers from the cooperative movement, SME organisations, and public authorities. Discussions focused on how partnerships between SMEs, SME cooperatives, and local authorities can strengthen the proximity economy, support territorial revitalisation, and contribute to the EU's goal of strategic autonomy.

### **EESC Social Economy Category**

The EESC Social Economy Category held a meeting on the 2024 study "Benchmarking the Socio-Economic Performance of the EU Social Economy" which was co-chaired by EESC member and our board member Giuseppe Guerini. Cooperatives Europe was invited to contribute and highlighted the need for data-driven, evidence-based policymaking. The importance of fully integrating cooperatives into social economy data framework was stressed.

### **Conference: Cooperatives' Priorities for the 2024–2029 Term**

In November 2024, Cooperatives Europe co-organised a conference in the European Parliament with CECOP, supported by Euro Coop, COGECA, REScoop, and EACB. Titled Cooperative Vision for a Sustainable and Competitive Europe: Priorities for the 2024–2029 EU Term, the event demonstrated the strength of cross-sector cooperation in the movement. It aimed to build political momentum for cooperative priorities in the new EU mandate. The conference saw strong attendance and engagement from several Members of the European Parliament, including Irene Tinagli (S&D, event host), Herbert Dorfmann (EPP), Stefano Bonaccini (S&D), and Maravillas Abadía Jover (EPP), who contributed in person or via video message.

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## **Key events**



# 3

## Equality, Inclusion, and Diversity

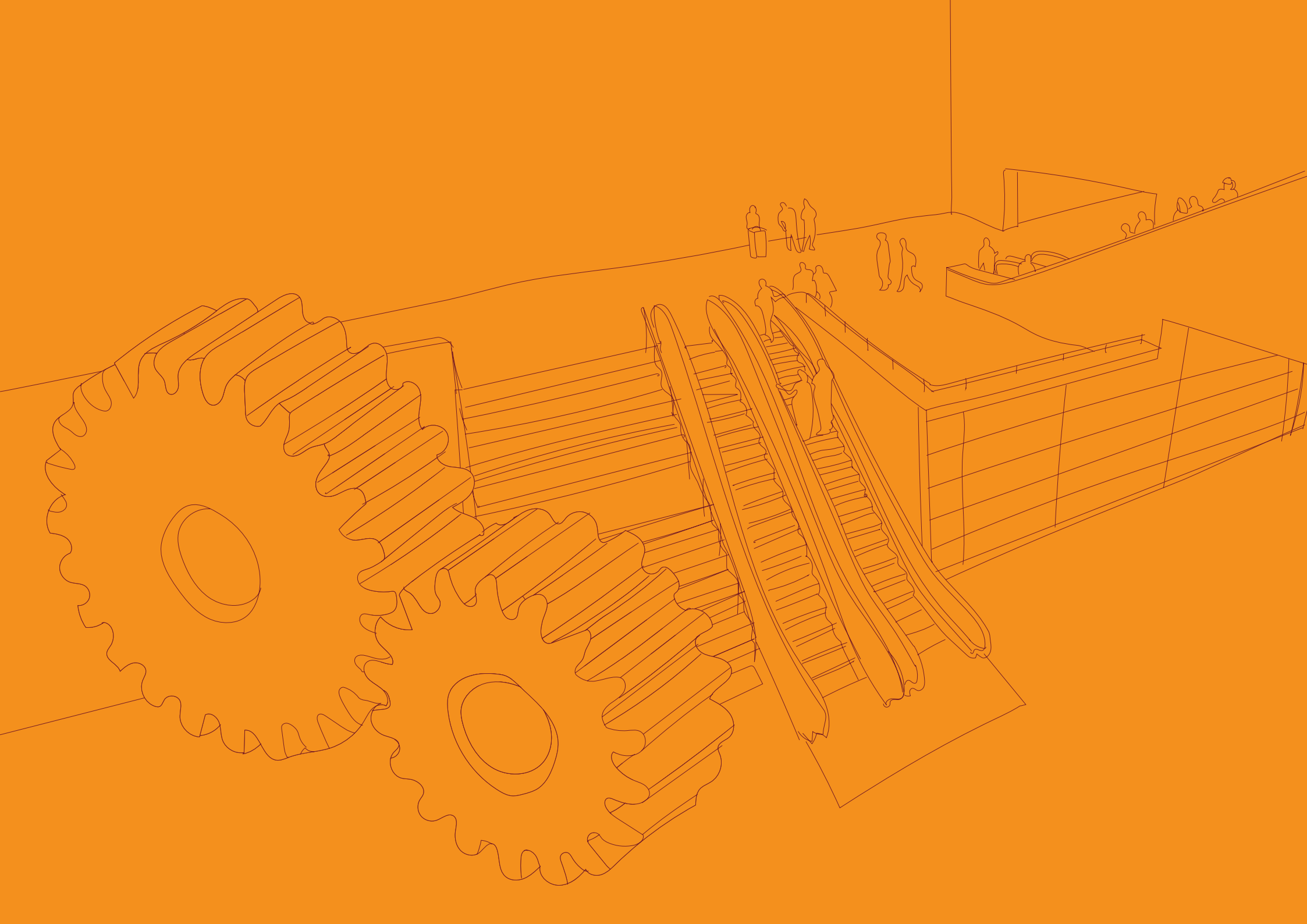
and best practices related to Gender and Diversity. Gathering on an ad-hoc and thematic basis, this space will foster an open dialogue while allowing us to collect data and inputs for research and advocacy purposes.

### **Shaping an inclusive cooperative culture**

This year, Cooperatives Europe has stepped up its efforts on gender equality and diversity (G&D) by launching a new 2025 action plan. In the scope of the International Year of the Cooperative 2025 and the Framework Partnership #coops4dev, the G&D action plan aims to mainstream the gender dimension across Cooperatives Europe's work and highlight the valuable contributions of its member addressing challenges and sharing their best practices.

The Action Plan foresees many activities, including the creation of a Focus Group on Gender and Diversity, among others. This focus group will provide a space for interested cooperative members and experts to share knowledge within and beyond the cooperative movement on topics





# 4

## Knowledge for change

Cooperatives Europe is committed to promoting the cooperative model through education and research, recognising them as strategic pillars for fostering sustainable and inclusive entrepreneurship. Our efforts are focused on integrating cooperative principles and practices into educational curricula, particularly at higher education levels. The “education lighthouse” led our efforts, advocating for the inclusion of cooperative-related issues in European educational programmes and engaging with members to amplify our impact. One of our key projects, SE4Ces, an Erasmus+ partnership that developed educational modules and resources to mainstream social economy concepts, including cooperative entrepreneurship, within

higher education, allowed us to create a stable network of partners including universities and social economy organisations.

Beyond education, Cooperatives Europe is dedicated to providing comprehensive support for cooperative entrepreneurship. For us, education, training, and research are not only project topics; they are core activities that complement our advocacy and drive our mission to build a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

### **4.1 Digital Learning: launching DigiSE5.0**

The DigiSE5.0 project focuses on enhancing digital skills and innovation within the Social Economy. By providing training, resources, and collaborative opportunities, this Erasmus+ project will support social entrepreneurs in leveraging digital technologies to address societal challenges. Launched in January 2025, the project is currently in the initial research phase.

The partners selected relevant case studies on digital innovation and interactive training methodologies to explore the intersection of technology and social impact.

### **4.2 SE4Ces Community update**

The SE4Ces network, launched at the end of the Erasmus+ project, is growing and currently counts partners from multiple European countries and other regions.

The network aims to foster a collaborative environment where academic institutions, practitioners, and policymakers can exchange knowledge and best practices in the social economy. By leveraging the expertise and resources of its diverse membership, SE4Ces seeks to address contemporary challenges and contribute to the development of innovative solutions that promote social and economic well-being.

Involved universities are looking for opportunities to collaborate with other networks and advance the

proposal of an International Master's in Social Economy. This programme will build upon the educational framework established during the Erasmus+ project, offering students a comprehensive curriculum that combines theoretical knowledge with practical experience. The involved universities are actively seeking partnerships with other academic institutions and industry stakeholders to enrich the program and provide students with a global perspective on the social economy.

In addition to the International Masters program, the SE4Ces network is exploring various avenues for collaboration and expansion. This includes organising conferences, workshops, and new projects that bring together experts from different fields to discuss and advance the social economy agenda. The network is also committed to engaging with policymakers to advocate for policies that support the growth and sustainability of Social Economy initiatives across Europe and beyond.

#### **4.3 Cooperative knowledge: mapping and action**

The first half of 2025 saw the launch of initial discussions in Sofia on the creation of a Cooperative Academy—an international hybrid programme aimed at training cooperative experts and leaders. Representatives from cooperative boards, academic institutions, and research and education centres came together to explore the concept. Designed for practitioners, the Academy would offer flexible online courses compatible with professional commitments, helping participants develop their organisation's strategy in line with its cooperative identity.

In that same period, a dedicated working group, chaired by Board member Anu Puusa, has been leading efforts to increase the visibility of cooperatives' unique features, strengthen networks in cooperative education and research, and support members in promoting the commercial and social value of the cooperative model. Following our call to integrate cooperative business models into education early last year,

we launched a second key action in 2025: mapping existing initiatives in cooperative education and awareness-raising across Europe. This mapping, informed by a targeted survey, aims to provide a clearer picture of the current landscape and identify opportunities to further develop cooperative learning.



“The education system often teaches only profit-driven business. Cooperators shouldn't be kept in the dark.”

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**Anu Puusa**  
Vice-President of Cooperatives Europe

# 5

## Strengthening the cooperative youth voice in Europe

Throughout 2024 and 2025, the Young European Cooperators Network (YECN) worked on strengthening its online and offline presence, fostering partnerships with other networks while working on its own internal structure. The Network has established online Community Calls on a bimonthly basis to foster stronger connections among its members and provide a space for the regular exchange of information on the Network's activities and other noteworthy opportunities. The YECN has also developed Terms of Reference with the aim of becoming a permanent committee of Cooperatives Europe. This will guarantee long-term sustainability and ongoing support for the YECN, while also facilitating its operations by clarifying internal rules and processes.

In 2024, the YECN has been selected to participate in the EU Youth Test, an initiative led by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to integrate youth perspectives into EU policymaking. Through its participation in this innovative platform, the YECN will contribute to consultations and impact assessments alongside other youth organisations, ensuring that the voice of young cooperators is represented in shaping EU policies. The initiative reinforces efforts toward youth mainstreaming in legislation, with a focus on areas such as education, employment, and democratic engagement.

On 18 March 2025, the European Commission, in collaboration with the EESC, CECOP and Cooperatives Europe, hosted a high-level conference on cooperatives as key actors in boosting economic resilience and social cohesion in the EU, as part of the International Year of Cooperatives. The Young European Cooperators Network (YECN) actively contributed to the organisation of the workshop

on Boosting Youth Cooperative Entrepreneurship, selecting a panel of dynamic young speakers to showcase innovative approaches from across Europe. Furthermore, YECN President Anna Loscalzo was invited to speak in the final plenary session, "What future for cooperatives in the European Union?", where she represented the voice of the next generation of cooperators.

Finally, the YECN, on behalf of Cooperatives Europe, is participating in an Erasmus+ project designed to put youth advocacy at the forefront of the Global Forum for Social and Solidarity Economy (GSEF) in Bordeaux in October 2025. Together with other youth organisations, the YECN is working toward building a common advocacy campaign for the promotion of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SEE) and will be instrumental in selecting and supporting young cooperators from Belgium to actively participate in the Global Forum Bordeaux GSEF 2025 as ambassadors for their local contexts and realities.





# 6

## Cooperatives in International development

Building on the success of the first ICA-EU partnership “Cooperatives in Development: people-centred business in action” (2016-2022) – #coops4dev, on April 12, 2024, Cooperatives Europe became part of a new ICA-EU Partnership Agreement until the end of 2028. Titled “People-centered businesses for sustainable, democratic & inclusive development”, the second phase of #coops4dev aims to **promote international cooperative development and highlight the role of cooperatives as actors contributing to the achievement of the UN Agenda2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.**

The new #coops4dev prioritises a **decentralised and localised approach**, with one Programme Coordinator per ICA region to better respond to

the specific needs of the Network members and showcase their work. In the case of Europe, guided by the theme “Circular economy for a just twin transition”, this translates into:

- an expansion of the activities in the Neighbourhood – Western Balkans, Türkiye, and Eastern Europe to position coops as an innovative and people-centred business model
- A strengthened cooperation between cooperative development organisations and cooperatives without an international portfolio
- The strengthening and establishment of meaningful partnerships with EU institutions, research institutes, academia, and civil society actors, to work in synergy to promote the added value of cooperatives to our local and global communities.

In this first year of design and implementation, Cooperatives Europe invested our efforts not only in internal reforms and collaborative synergies

but also in reactivating and expanding our #coops4dev partners’ network across Europe.

Here is what was achieved to ensure all members of the European cooperative movement could benefit from the ICA-EU Partnership:

- A reformed **Cooperatives Europe Development Platform (CEDP)**: now counting 13 members, the CEDP acts as Cooperatives Europe’s working group on international cooperative development. The new format ensures the enlargement of both the membership and the scope of activities (advocacy, research, capacity building and networking), to encourage a better engagement and exchange of good practices within the wider European cooperative movement. In the past year, the CEDP met 5 times online and 1 physically at the margin of the ICA GCC in New Delhi.
- **2 thematic joint strategies** – one on Gender and Diversity, that proposes

concrete actions like an ad-hoc Focus Group as a space to link our members' work to G&D experts (to be launched in May 2025), and the other on Housing, as one of the key EU priorities in both internal and external actions.

Cooperatives Europe positioned cooperatives in discussions and settings beyond the movement. As members of the EU Global Gateway Civil Society Advisory Platform and EU Youth Dialogue Platform, we participated in several EU consultations to ensure the cooperative voice is heard alongside other civil society actors. This was also achieved through crucial discussions during global events:

- **World Forum on Local Economic Development (Sevilla, 01/04/2025)**  
– Cooperatives Europe was selected among more than 1000 applications to hold a side event on the first and main day of the Forum to present the European work under #coops4dev and the national and international activities of the CEDP members.

The session was co-designed with the CEDP members and offered an opportunity to present and discuss the cooperative business model with a non-cooperative audience. Additionally, Cooperatives Europe secured our presence in the panel "Local circular economy initiatives: international experiences" to discuss the link between cooperatives and circular economy represented by two young experts among which Marcelina Zjawińska, the vice-president of the Young European Cooperators Network, and Asia Guerreschi, focal point of CCR Europe Young Scholars.

- **ICA Global Cooperative Conference (New Delhi, 25-28/11/2024)** – Cooperatives Europe designed, coordinated, and moderated the IV.A parallel session to the plenary "Shaping the Future: Towards realizing Prosperity for All in the 21st Century". Titled "**Fit for UN SDG12: textile cooperatives as an alternative response to global demands through a people-centered circular**

**economy**", the session highlighted cooperatives active in the textile sectors as a successful example of circularity, through the voices of six women experts within and outside the cooperative movement.

Last but not least, this Partnership has been a great opportunity to strengthen our dialogue with the other ICA regions and jointly advance common priorities. In this first year, Cooperatives Europe identified the three key shared topics: care economy with the Cooperatives of the Americas, gender with ICA Africa, and housing with ICA Asia and Pacific.





### **The ICA-EU Framework Partnership:**

The ICA-EU Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (FFPA) - #coops4dev - represents a strategic collaboration between the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and the European Union (EU), aimed at highlighting the cooperative contribution to the UN Agenda2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This partnership is built on the foundation of mutual goals of promoting sustainable, democratic, and inclusive economic growth through cooperative enterprises.

It recognises and promotes cooperatives as key actors and partners to advance the EU International Development agenda, through initiatives of capacity building, advocacy, research and education, all to continue strengthening the cooperative movement globally.

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## What is the ICA-EU FFPA







# 7

## Communications and visibility

### **7.1 Communications in focus: strategy, channels, and reach**

In 2025, Cooperatives Europe started implementing its new communications strategy to strengthen the visibility and impact of Cooperatives Europe and the European cooperative movement. The new strategy focuses on five key objectives: strengthening the shared story of the cooperative movement, enhancing digital presence and accessibility, enhancing awareness of Cooperatives Europe's work in upscaling members' impact, deepening collaboration among members, and positioning the organisation as a trusted source of information.

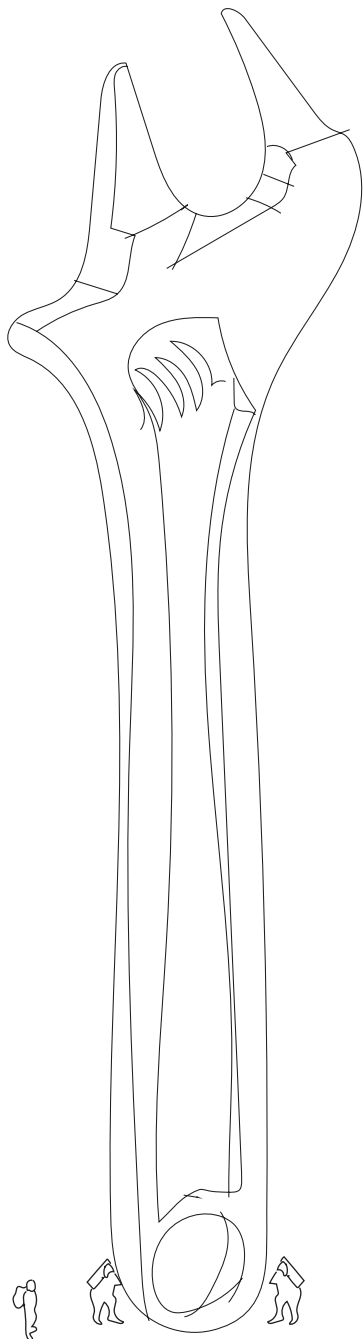
Based on our strategic objectives, several key communication actions

have already been implemented, with others underway. Cooperatives Europe has developed a brand book, currently under internal review, to strengthen coherence and visibility. Those following our channels may have noticed a shift towards more consistent and authentic visual design.

Our content is now organised into clearly defined streams, allowing for more targeted messaging and improved impact tracking. The website's structure and accessibility have also been enhanced. Work has begun on reviewing our social media strategy to advance our storytelling across platforms.

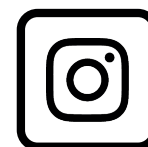
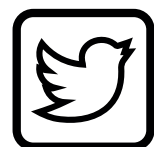
To foster collaboration, the Communications Working Group was expanded to include member organisations and met three times over the year. Internal coordination was also improved by consolidating the exchange of materials through a single intranet, which is now in the testing phase. Additionally, we reviewed and

updated key communication materials, including our flyer, and produced a new video to highlight Cooperatives Europe's role in connecting cooperatives across the continent.



## 7.2 Our audience at a glance: platform growth 2024-2025

### Followers



# 8

## Governance and membership

### 8.1 General Assembly and Board

Governance is the linchpin of any organisation, especially one that represents the cooperative movement. In these uncertain and turbulent times, ensuring cohesion and coordination through genuine dialogue has become more important than ever. Strong links between members, the Board, and the Secretariat have been essential to keep the movement actively connected and cooperative.

Ahead of our 2024 General Assembly, a symposium titled “Cooperatives and Purpose-Driven Enterprises: What Sets Them Apart?” was hosted by Febecoop at the P&V Cooperative. The event brought together participants for a full day of presentations, discussions,

and networking, celebrating both the distinctiveness and shared values of cooperatives and other purpose-driven enterprises.

The General Assembly elected Professor Petar Stefanov, President of CCU Bulgaria, as President of Cooperatives Europe for a one-year term. Under his leadership, the Board of Directors and the Vice-Presidents played an active role throughout the year, meeting seven and six times, respectively. The Board not only provided oversight for the work programme but also contributed to the advancement of strategic projects and thematic lighthouses aligned with Cooperatives Europe’s priorities.

Vice-Presidents were each assigned responsibility for a specific strategic area—such as advocacy, education, or communication—which they developed and presented for approval by the full Board. While most meetings were held online, three in-person sessions proved essential in deepening dialogue and

fostering cohesion. A joint meeting 8 with members of the Cooperatives Europe Board in Sofia further enhanced coordination and strategic alignment at the European level.





## 8.2 A membership update: growing our network

In the context of ongoing economic challenges, maintaining, let alone expanding, membership remains a significant task. Strengthening ties with our members is therefore a priority. Cooperatives Europe actively welcomed delegations from member organisations to exchange on priorities, share challenges, and present our ongoing work. In 2024, our membership remained stable, with one departure offset by the addition of three new members. Notably, we welcomed our first member from Hungary, a key milestone that enhances our representativeness across the EU.

# 9

## Cooperatives Europe as European region of the ICA

Cooperatives Europe serves as the European region of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA)—the only global organisation representing cooperatives. In 2024, the ICA launched a strategic reflection process focused on empowering the future of the cooperative movement from 2016 to 2030. As part of this process, the Secretariat participated in two dedicated workshops alongside the ICA Director General, regional directors, and representatives of other ICA bodies to discuss medium- and long-term priorities in response to current and emerging challenges.

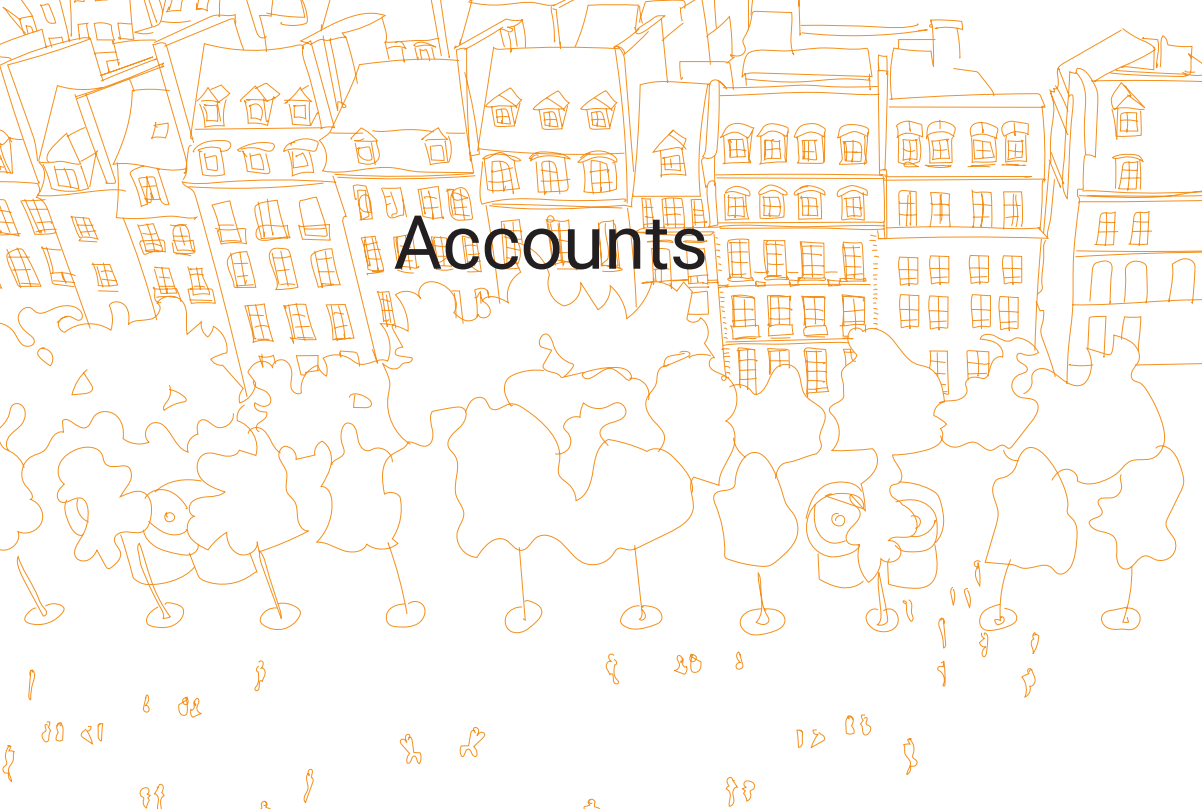
The global management team was further consolidated through regular meetings between regional directors and the ICA Director General, enabling the coordination of board decisions

and dialogue on shared concerns. Cooperatives Europe remained actively involved in various ICA initiatives, particularly in the areas of gender equality, communication, and youth. At governance level, Cooperatives Europe's President also serves as ICA Vice-President and, together with other European board members, participated in both ICA Board meetings and the ICA General Assembly.



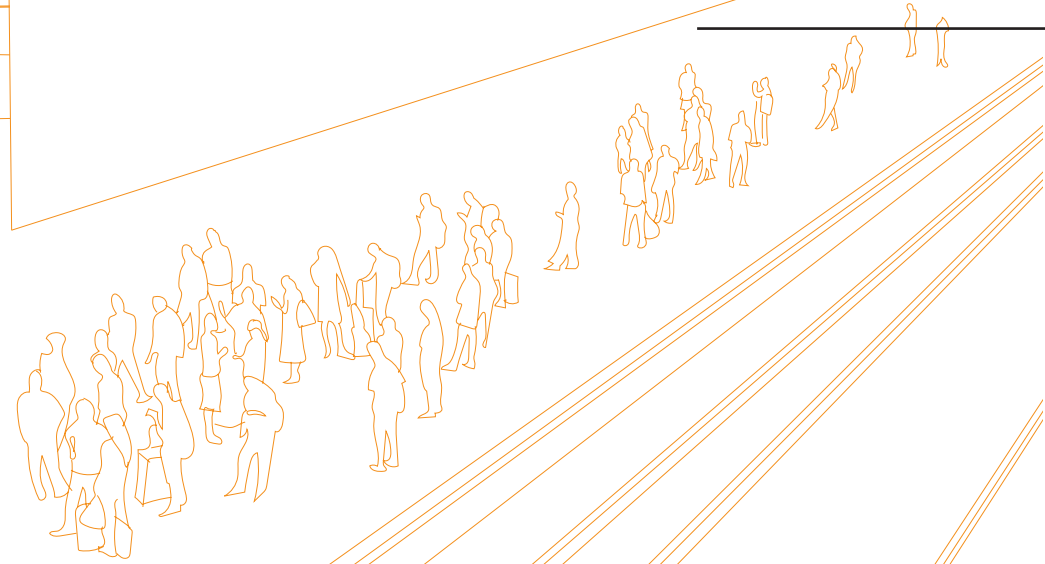






# Accounts

## Incomes



Membership

67%

Project incomes

18%

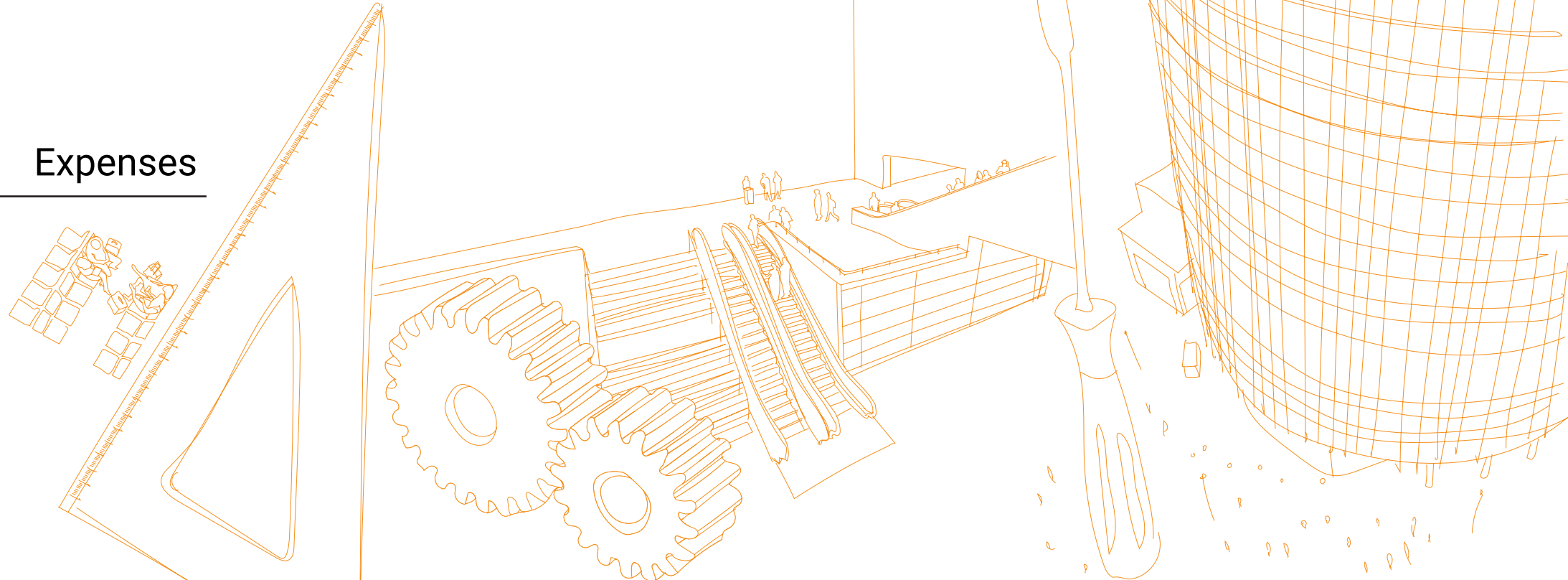
Donations

1%

Others

14%

## Expenses



Personnel

66%

Project expenses

5%

Travel & office

16%

External services – IT

5%

Meetings & other

8%



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