

GLOBAL REPORT



# INDUSTRIAL AND SERVICE COOPERATIVES

2015  
2016

CICOPA **70** years

INDUSTRIAL AND SERVICE COOPERATIVES:  
GLOBAL REPORT  
2015 – 2016

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# INDEX

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.....	P4
METHODOLOGY.....	P6
NUMBERS AND FACTS.....	P9
TRENDS IN ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT.....	P22
KEY ISSUES.....	P27
TACKLING CHALLENGES AND SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES.....	P35
POLICY ISSUES.....	P41
OUR NETWORK: OUR MEMBERS WORLDWIDE.....	P48

# INTRODUCTORY NOTE

We are happy to share with you our second two-year global report on industrial and service cooperatives, covering the years 2015 and 2016, whereas the first one covered the years 2013 and 2014.

A significant added value of this second report is that it allows us to start monitoring systematically the evolution of our global cooperative network, both in the quantitative and qualitative components of the analysis.

It is also worth pointing out that our whole exercise of reporting the situation of our cooperative network, which started with data from 2013, is the result of several years of patient preparation. We started our first general survey of members back in 2004, and our first questionnaire on economic activities, based on the UN International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), in 2008. In 2009, we launched our surveys on members' qualitative data in the wake of the global crisis. But it is only in 2013 that we had collected enough pieces of the puzzle to have a rather faithful (even though far from complete) picture of our network.

On the other hand, during those years, our network has also been undergoing a strong geographical enlargement, jumping from 18 countries to 32 countries in 15 years (including large ones like the USA and Brazil), thus making this reporting exercise increasingly meaningful.

Another added value of the present report is that we have been able to provide a quantitative estimation of industrial and service cooperatives in the world, beyond our own network. This has been possible thanks to another big reporting exercise in which CICOPA has been involved over the last few years, namely the first and the second report on « Cooperatives and Employment » (2014 and 2017)<sup>1</sup>. That series of reports, differently from the present one, deals with employment in the entire cooperative movement, but it provides us with very useful data enabling us to make an estimation of cooperatives in industrial and service sectors as well.

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<sup>1</sup> Roelants B, Eum HS and Terrasi E, Cooperatives and Employment: a Global Report; Brussels & Levis: CICOPA & Desjardins, 2014; and Eum HS: Cooperatives and Employment: Second Global Report; Brussels: CICOPA, 2017

As the reader will discover, this reality is much larger than the CICOPA network, suggesting that there still is a long way to go before CICOPA can include all these cooperatives (some of which are affiliated to ICA member organizations, others not), and thus be able to improve its level of reporting on, and representing industrial and service cooperatives in the world.

The fact that our second report on cooperative employment was completed in August explains that the publication of the present report has been delayed, in order to incorporate data from that other report.

After introducing our methodology, the report presents the main figures of our cooperative sector today, both within the CICOPA network and beyond. It then delves into the trends in entrepreneurial development that we have been observing within the network over the last two years. Successively, the report focuses on two particularly important issues: youth cooperative entrepreneurship and the green economy. It then analyses the challenges and opportunities which our cooperatives are facing as well as the policy issues reported by our members at the national level and those dealt with by CICOPA itself at the international level. At the end, we provide a map showing our members around the world.

I would like to thank wholeheartedly all our members who provided data for this report, knowing that filling in detailed questionnaires is arduous and time consuming. This report could never have been published without their cooperation.

Let me also thank warmly my two CICOPA colleagues who drafted this report, namely Elisa Terrasi, our Development and Studies Officer and Eum Hyungsik, our Data Analyst, as well as David Zuluaga who worked for several months in our office contributing to this report. My thanks also go to Reza Opdebeeck, our Communication Officer, who did the graphic design.

**Bruno Roelants**  
CICOPA Secretary General  
28 November 2017



# METHODOLOGY

The present report is intended to reflect a picture of the worldwide cooperative movement in industry and services that is as accurate as possible. For its elaboration, we tried to put in place a new methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative surveys with strengthened internal desk research.

## QUALITATIVE INFORMATION

The qualitative methodology consisted mainly of the three following steps:

- > Firstly, we identified the main trends and challenges among CICOPA members<sup>2</sup>, for the period between January 2015 and June 2016. The identification process was essentially based on a systematic review of national members' sources in their original language, mainly online national bulletins and websites. With the help of an automatic translator, we listed and reviewed all the titles and we identified the most recurrent ones. Additionally, we reviewed all the news titles of the CICOPA e-magazine Work Together<sup>3</sup>, for the entire period between the beginning of 2015 and the end of 2016.
- > Secondly, we tried to reflect the results of our review through the elaboration and administration of tailored questionnaires specifically adapted to each member and country. All the questionnaires included ad hoc questions on youth and the « green economy »<sup>4</sup>.
- > As a third step, we collected and analysed all members' responses and we tried to delve into the main issues that arose through a complementary analysis of members' data and other online relevant sources. When necessary, we went back to our members for ad hoc questions and clarification requests.

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<sup>2</sup> The members consulted were the ones affiliated to CICOPA in the years 2015 and 2016

<sup>3</sup> Available at <http://www.cicopa.coop/Work-Together>

<sup>4</sup> By "green economy", we mean the economic activities related to the objectives of environmental protection and low-carbon economic activities

As far as the qualitative consultation is concerned, we received 27 answers from 18 countries, out of 40 consulted members on four continents<sup>5</sup>. We could thus register an increase in CICOPA members' participation compared to the previous consultation undertaken for the 2013-2014 Report, when 23 CICOPA member organizations from 17 countries took part in the process.

The main idea was to increase our information database thanks to a more extensive internal research in order to supplement the information provided by our members. Nevertheless, while we can be satisfied with the amount of information collected, which is much higher compared to the previous consultation, it is worth underlining that this new methodology does not replace our members' participation nor does it reduce the importance of their feedback. Our members' inputs and availability to provide us with field information continue to be the main ingredient of our work.

## QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION

To collect quantitative data, two questionnaires were used: one for aggregated information and the other one for information broken down according to the UN International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC)<sup>6</sup>. Each questionnaire requested data for 4 years (from 2012 to 2015) in order to produce time-series datasets. Information on 2012 and 2013 which was already collected in the previous data collection was inserted in the table for validation or, when it occurred, modification from member organisations. The questionnaire for aggregated information also included ad hoc questions on availability of information concerning gender, age and green economy issues.

The main data collection process was organised mainly in 2016 and 2017 in parallel with the consultation for qualitative information. Differently from the latter, the data collection was organised only with CICOPA full members which are federative associations at the national level. As a result, 20 member organisations provided quantitative data. However, the data broken down by economic sectors were mainly provided by European members. Therefore, it should be noted that the analysis on economic activities is significantly biased toward European data. In addition to collected data, quantitative information available from other sources was also used in order to complement the missing data.

<sup>5</sup> From Europe: AGCI PSL (Italy); AGCI Solidarietà (Italy); ANCPL (Italy); Federlavoro (Italy); Federsolidarietà (Italy); Legacoop Servizi (Italy); COCETA (Spain); Confesal (Spain); CG Scop (France); Scop BTP (France); Kooperationen (Denmark); NAUWC (Poland); UCECOM (Romania); NUWPC (Bulgaria); SCMVD (Czech Republic); Co-operatives UK (United Kingdom); Coompanion (Sweden). From Africa: UCA (Uganda). From Asia: JWCU (Japan) and VCA (Vietnam). From America: CNCT (Argentina); Fe-cootra (Argentina); FCPU (Uruguay); ASCOOP (Colombia); CONFECOOP (Colombia); CWCF (Canada); USFWC (USA)

<sup>6</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/isic-4.asp>

Using newly collected data (21 members) as well as previously collected ones, datasets covering 30 member organisations out of 40 CICOPA member organisations having a membership base were created. The datasets allow time-series analysis over 25 member organisations, although data is not always complete.

To understand the broader situation of cooperatives in industry and service, this report uses the datasets created for the study « Cooperatives and Employment: Second Global Report » (2017) (below Second Employment Report)<sup>7</sup>. From the datasets, the information on worker cooperatives, social cooperatives, producers' cooperatives in industry and service sectors and cooperatives working in social services, education, health, community development and work integration, regardless of their membership base, were used to illustrate the fields actually or possibly represented by CICOPA.





# NUMBERS AND FACTS

## OVERVIEW ON COOPERATIVES IN INDUSTRY AND SERVICE SECTORS IN GENERAL (BOTH WITHIN AND BEYOND THE CICOPA NETWORK)

Before analysing cooperatives in CICOPA member organisations, it is interesting to make an overview on cooperatives in the industrial and service sectors in general (namely both within and beyond the CICOPA network). From the dataset used for the Second Employment Report, we extracted information on four different types: worker cooperatives, producers' cooperatives in industrial and service sectors, social cooperatives and cooperatives active in the same sectors as social cooperatives but not recognized as social cooperatives *per se*. As shown on table 1, the total estimate is 377,984 cooperatives providing more than 13.6 million jobs *in* cooperatives and 6 million jobs *within the scope of* cooperatives. However, differently from producer-members in agriculture or fishery, it seems reasonable to suppose that a significant part of producer-members in industrial and service sectors might be in similar situations with worker-members whose work and employment totally or almost totally depend on their cooperatives. The list of cooperative types for producers' cooperatives in industry and service sectors (table 2) helps us understand what kind of activities these cooperatives carry out, and how similar work within them might be with worker cooperatives.

**TABLE 1**  
**GLOBAL OVERVIEW ON COOPERATIVES IN INDUSTRY AND SERVICE SECTORS**

COOP TYPE	N° of coop	N° of worker members (A)	N° of employees (B)	N° of producer members (C)	Total n° of jobs (A+B+C)	N° of user members
Worker coop	253,274 (67.0%)	10966,776	1,208,777	280,159	12,455,712	2,473,391
Producer coop	66,311 (17.5%)	7,641	800,955	3,762,018	4,570,614	0
Social coop	16,746 (4.4%)	265,337	166,232		431,569	485,977
Possible social coop	41,653 (11.0%)	256,313	234,167	1,977,986	2,468,466	1,111,960
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>377,984 (100%)</b>	<b>11,496,067</b>	<b>2,410,131</b>	<b>6,020,163</b>	<b>19,926,361</b>	<b>4,071,328</b>

Source: Own elaboration from the dataset for the Second Employment Report

Although CICOPA also represents producers' cooperatives in industrial and service sectors, sufficient attention has not been dedicated to these cooperatives. Only a small number of these cooperatives are affiliated to CICOPA member organisations. However, a growing interest regarding these cooperatives has been observed, when analysing cooperatives in industrial and service sectors in Asia and Africa, where the main cooperative types in these sectors are producers' cooperatives and the concept of worker cooperative is neither well known nor clearly defined. Producers' cooperatives are defined as such mainly due to the self-employed legal status of members. Although they have similarities with worker cooperatives, the latter, unlike the former, allow worker-members to enjoy a significant level of social protection and rights at work through conventional employment contracts as employees or through a specific cooperative labour contract which is specifically regulated by cooperative legislation. Therefore, these cooperatives should be further analysed in order to classify them correctly and to provide their producer-members with appropriate social protection and rights at work. It should be noted that newly emerging forms of work in cooperatives, mainly through on-line platforms and the concepts of platform cooperativism and freelancers' cooperatives, mainly have to do with these forms of cooperatives as well.

**TABLE 2**  
**PRODUCERS' COOPERATIVES IN INDUSTRY AND SERVICE SECTORS**

Sub-type	N° of coop	N° of producer members (A)	N° of employees (B)	Total n° of jobs (A+B)
Transport	20,890	1,037,106	401,136	1,438,242
Undefined	20,685	496,191	259,023	755,214
Other producer activities	15,580	41,178	299	41,477
Professional	5,447	150,157	5,497	155,654
Artisan-craft	3,677	2,037,106	135,000	2,172,106
Tourism-culture	32	280	0	280
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,311</b>	<b>3,762,018</b>	<b>800,955</b>	<b>4,562,973</b>

Source: Own elaboration from the dataset for the Second Employment report

The concept of social cooperative has been institutionalized in an increasing number of countries, since the approval of the first social cooperative law in 1991 in Italy. Based on the analysis of existing legislation and consultations with member organisations, CICOPA approved in 2011 the World Standards of Social Cooperatives<sup>8</sup> that have served as a reference for several new laws on social cooperatives. Social cooperatives mainly provide services of general interest, work integration of vulnerable persons and often both of them. One of the specificities of the social cooperative model is their frequent multi-stakeholder governance structure.

There are even two legally recognized social cooperative types that do not define the content of the « social » but only the specific way of identifying and addressing the « social » through multi-stakeholder governance (collective interest cooperatives in France and solidarity cooperatives in Quebec, Canada). It needs to be mentioned that, in Spain, the social cooperative status is not an independent one but a secondary legal status which can be attributed to worker cooperatives or other types of cooperatives when they meet certain conditions. These types of social cooperatives are not reflected in the statistical data but are included in the data on original cooperative types.

Before there is formal recognition of the concept of social cooperative in national legislation, we find cooperatives in the same economic sectors as social cooperatives, with similar governance systems and with the same purpose of serving the local community. In many developing countries where social and health services have not been sufficiently provided by public authorities and where welfare systems have not been sufficiently developed, cooperatives have been playing a significant role in providing these fundamental services to local people with open and accessible membership, quite often in close cooperation with public authorities.

Therefore, it would be interesting to analyse cooperatives in education, health and social services that have not yet been examined through the concept of social cooperatives. We also find cooperatives categorized as community development or general interest cooperatives. Women' cooperatives in some Asian countries seem to share the concept of work integration for women who are often in very vulnerable situations in these countries. We identified all these cooperatives as « possible social cooperatives » regardless of their membership base. Social cooperatives identified through clear definitions are not included in table 3. Some of these cooperatives might be reclassified as social cooperatives after a deeper analysis of their characters. Based on the analysis, refining the World Standards of Social Cooperatives might be eventually needed.

**TABLE 3  
POSSIBLE SOCIAL COOPERATIVES**

Sub-type	N° of coop	N° of producer member (A)	N° of worker member (B)	N° of employee (C)	Total n° of jobs (A+B+C)	N° of user member
Education	454	0	4,738	23,330	28,068	42,716
General + community interest	91	13,353	123	0	13,476	0
Health	1,295	0	225,244	111,793	337,037	1,012,104
Social services	310	0	0	46	46	8,637
Social services and health	185	0	25,597	36,577	62,174	48,503
Work integration	39,318	1,964,633	611	62,421	2,027,665	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,653</b>	<b>1,977,986</b>	<b>256,313</b>	<b>234,167</b>	<b>2,468,466</b>	<b>1,111,960</b>

Source: Own elaboration from the dataset for the Second Employment Report

An important part of cooperatives in industrial and service sectors are found in Asia (60%) followed by Europe (19.7%) and America (19.1%).

**TABLE 4**  
**GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF COOPERATIVES IN INDUSTRIAL AND SERVICE SECTORS**

Continent (N° of countries)	N° of coop	N° of worker members (A)	N° of employees (B)	N° of producer members (C)	Total n° of jobs (A+B+C)	N° of user members
Asia (14)	225,912 (60.0%)	8,564,526	883,073	3,538,612	12,986,211	266,579
Europe (18)	74,532 (19.7%)	1,558,021	1,007,804	0	2,565,825	157,982
America (23)	72,246 (19.1%)	1,335,684	274,934	282,976	1,893,594	2,830,515
Africa (6)	5,277 (1.4%)	37,836	243,535	2,198,575	2,479,946	4,790
Oceania (3)	17 (0.1%)	0	785	0	785	811,462
<b>Total (64)</b>	<b>377,984 (100%)</b>	<b>11,496,067</b>	<b>2,410,131</b>	<b>6,020,163</b>	<b>19,926,361</b>	<b>4,071,328</b>

Source: Own elaboration from the dataset for the Second Employment report

Among these cooperatives, CICOPA covers 14.23% through its member organisations, including more than half of social cooperatives and 16.5% of worker cooperatives. As table 5 shows, producers' cooperatives are prevalently outside the CICOPA network and need to be further analysed so that they could join it and their voices could be heard at the international level. A better understanding of possible social cooperatives, who are also prevalently outside the CICOPA network, would be an additional task ahead.

**TABLE 5**  
**COVERAGE OF CICOPA MEMBERSHIP IN COOPERATIVES IN INDUSTRY AND SERVICE SECTORS (ACCORDING TO PARTIAL DATA)**

Coop type	N° of coop (A)	N° coop in CICOPA members (B)	Current coverage of CICOPA membership (B/A)
Worker coop	253,274	41,861	16.5%
Producer coop	66,311	2,203	3.3%
Social coop	16,746	8,902	53.2%
Possible social coop	41,653	813	2.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>377,984</b>	<b>53,779</b>	<b>14.2%</b>

Source: Own elaboration from the dataset for the Second Employment report and CICOPA dataset

## COOPERATIVES IN THE CICOPA NETWORK

As mentioned in the first section (methodology), the dataset was made mainly with newly collected data in 2016 but also with the data used in the first biannual report on industrial and service cooperatives (2013-2014)<sup>9</sup> for the cases where we did not obtain new updated data. Among 40 CICOPA full members, two members (Liga de cooperativas, Puerto Rico and CO-BOCE, Bolivia) which joined in 2016 were not included in this data collection. Besides these two members, data on 8 member organisations were not available. Among data collected on 30 member organisations, those on 21 member organisations were updated mainly through information from members but also from publicly accessible data. Data on 25 member organisations also provide time-series information, although not always completely. It should be noted that many member organisations represent more than one cooperative type. The data collection method was designed to address these different types and their specificities through different questionnaires. Table 6 summarizes these main characters of the data set. Concerning the reference year, whereas in many cases it is 2015, there is also a significant number of cases with different reference years from 2010 to 2017.

**TABLE 6**  
**MAIN CHARACTERS OF THE USED DATASET**

	Total number of members	Data included	Updated data	Time-series data
Europe	21	20	14	15
Asia	4	4	3	4
North America	4	2	2	2
South America	9	4	2	4
Africa	2	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>

Source: Own elaboration from CICOPA data set

The different types covered by CICOPA member organisations can be regrouped into 5 types: worker cooperative, non-cooperative worker-owned enterprise, social cooperative, possible social cooperative and producer cooperative. The total number of cooperatives analysed is 53,779. This number represents about 82% of the estimated number of cooperatives in the CICOPA network, which is 65,000<sup>10</sup>. The reader should always keep in mind that the figures in the following tables do not represent the totality of the CICOPA network, but only the part of it on which we obtained sufficient data. In addition, as table 7 shows, the collected data represent mainly European information. Unfortunately, compared to their important size, the information on South American members is very underrepresented. This bias in data collection should be remembered throughout this quantitative analysis, in particular as far as information on economic activities is concerned (table 11, 12 and 13).

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.cicopa.coop/Global-biannual-report-on.html>

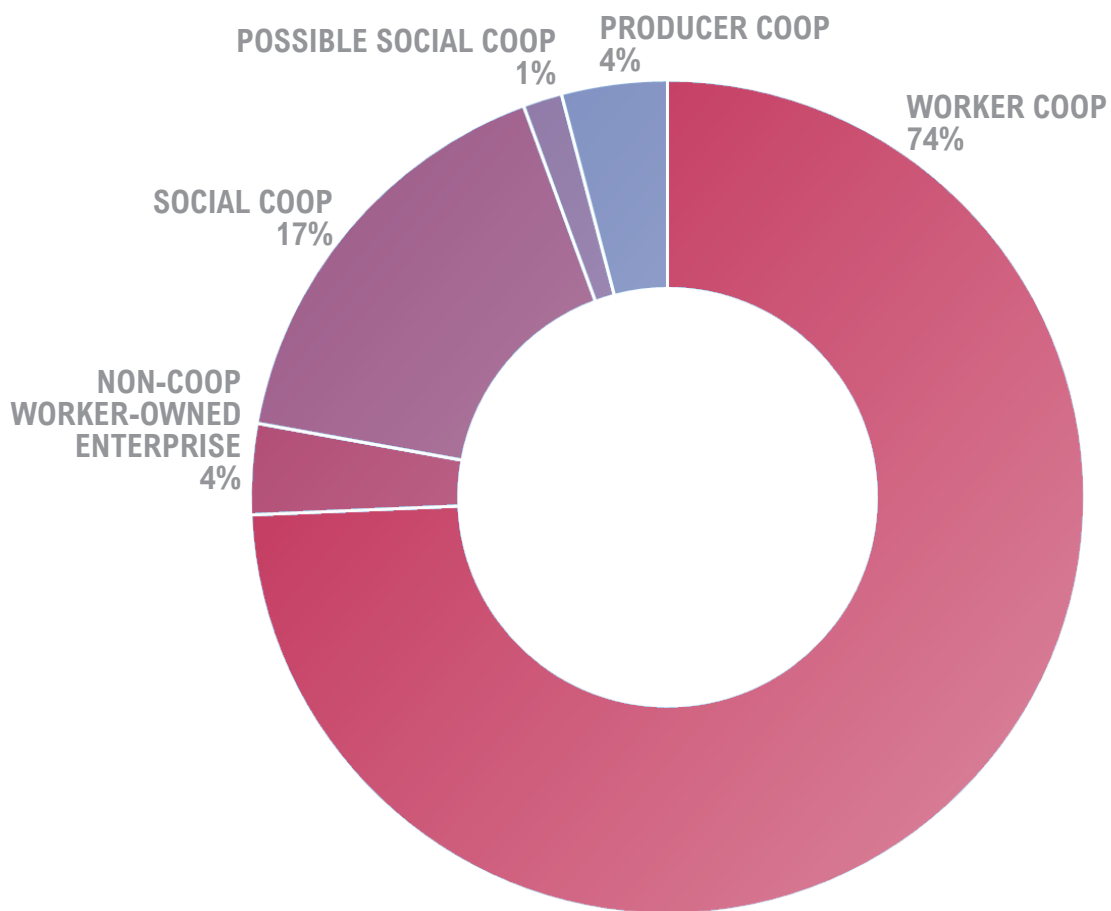
<sup>10</sup> This estimation is the same as the one we presented in the previous biannual report. Although there has been an increase in CICOPA membership and cooperatives in CICOPA member organisations, it is reasonable to maintain this estimation of 65,000, considering there has been a significant decrease in some countries

**TABLE 7  
COOPERATIVES IN THE CICOPA NETWORK BY TYPE**

Coop type	Europe	Asia	South America	North America	Total	Remark
Worker cooperatives	30,038	7,422	2,281	230	39,971	
Non-coop worker-owned enterprises	1,890				1,890	Sociedad laboral (Spain)
Social cooperatives	8,721	170	8	3	8,902	
Possible social cooperatives			813		813	Health cooperatives (OCB, Brazil)
Producers' cooperatives	10	965	1,228		2,203	
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,659</b>	<b>8,557</b>	<b>4,330</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>53,779</b>	

Source: Own elaboration from CICOPA data set

**FIGURE 1  
COOPERATIVES IN THE CICOPA NETWORK BY TYPE**



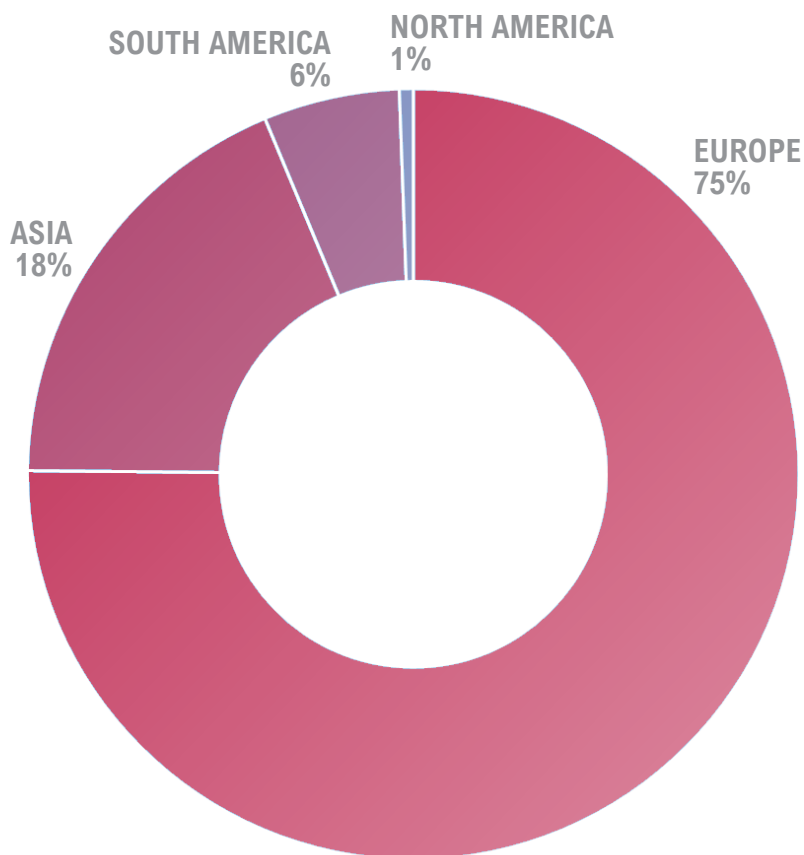
Worker cooperatives are the largest part of cooperatives in the CICOPA network (74%). Out of the reported cooperatives, we find 39,971 worker cooperatives which provide about 2 million jobs (1.7 million worker-members and 271 000 non-member employees) across CICOPA member organisations.

**TABLE 8**  
**WORKER COOPERATIVES IN THE CICOPA GLOBAL NETWORK (PARTIAL FIGURES)**

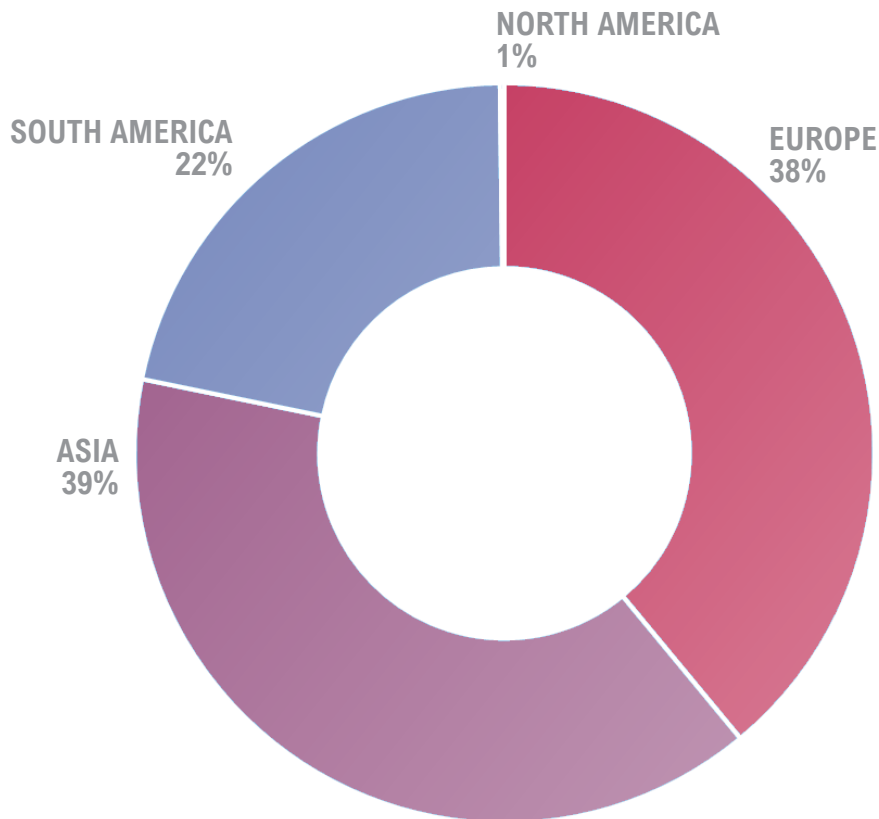
Coop type	Continent	N° of coops	N° of worker-members (A)	N° of non-member employees (B)	Total n° of jobs (A+B)
Worker coop	Europe	30,038	653,664	254,141	908,805
	Asia	7,422	657,324	8,576	665,900
	South America	2,281	361,861	7,671	369,532
	North America	230	3,224	762	3986
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,659</b>	<b>39,971</b>	<b>1,676,073</b>	<b>271,150</b>	<b>1,947,223</b>

Source: Own elaboration from CICOPA data set

**FIGURE 2**  
**WORKER COOPERATIVES IN THE CICOPA NETWORK BY CONTINENT**



**FIGURE 3**  
**NUMBER OF WORKER-MEMBERS IN WORKER COOPERATIVES OF THE CICOPA NETWORK BY CONTINENT**



Social cooperatives represent 17% of cooperatives in the CICOPA network. There are 8,902 social cooperatives including 2,890 work integration social cooperatives among the reported cooperatives, mainly affiliated to European members. They provide about 333,000 jobs (worker-members and non-member employees) including jobs for about 30,000 disadvantaged persons. With their multi-stakeholder governance structure, they also include about 18,000 non-worker members who are mainly users, volunteers and supporters.



**TABLE 9**  
**SOCIAL COOPERATIVES IN THE CICOPA NETWORK**

COOP TYPE	CONTINENT	N° of coops		N° of worker-members (A)		N° of non-member workers (C)		Total n° of jobs (A+C)	
			of which n° of coops with disadvantaged persons		of which n° of disadvantaged persons (B)		of which n° of disadvantaged persons (D)		of which n° of disadvantaged persons (B+D)
Social coop	Europe	8,721	2,882	234,989	25,882	95,001	3,049	329,990	28,931
	North America	3		110		8		118	
	South America	8	8	315	315	9	9	324	324
	Asia	170				2,290		2,290	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8,902</b>	<b>2890</b>	<b>235,414</b>	<b>26,197</b>	<b>97,308</b>	<b>3,058</b>	<b>332,722</b>	<b>29,255</b>
Possible social coop	South America	813		225,191		96,230		321,421	

Source: Own elaboration from CICOPA data set

The producer cooperative model is still little present in the CICOPA network. Only 2203 of them have been identified in CICOPA member organisations so far. In fact, they were not the main target types when the corresponding member organisations, which are apex-organisations, joined CICOPA. However, during the data analysis, they were included in taking account of CICOPA's recent effort to understand various models of cooperatives in industrial and service sectors. Beyond the sheer numbers, it seems even more important to try to better understand these cooperative types and to explore the relevant methods to organize them into the CICOPA network. This is particularly important in this moment when new forms of work and employment have multiplied mainly through on-line platforms and where a cooperative response is urgently needed. The concept of platform cooperativism seems to address this issue with a model which is very similar to producers' cooperatives in industrial and service sectors.

It should be noted that transportation cooperatives, tourism and leisure cooperatives and health cooperatives (included as possible social cooperatives) in OCB, one of CICOPA member organisations in Brazil, were not included in the previous biannual report. However, taking into account that these three types were differentiated from the worker cooperative type in the early 2000s<sup>11</sup>, they are included in the present analysis but with different types, such as producer cooperative and possible social cooperative.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.somoscooperativismo.coop.br/ramo-trabalho>

**TABLE 10**  
**PRODUCERS' COOPERATIVES IN THE CICOPA NETWORK**

Coop type	CICOPA member	Sub-type	N° of coops	N° of worker-members (A)	N° of non-member employees (B)	Total n° of jobs (A+B)
Producer coop	Co-operatives UK (UK)	Artisan / self-employed coop	10	22	nd	22
	VCA (Vietnam)	Transportation coop	965	nd	nd	
	OCB (Brazil)	Transportation coop	1,205	136,425	11,209	147,634
		Tourism and leisure coop	23	1,823	15	1,838
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,203</b>	<b>138,270</b>	<b>11,224</b>	<b>149,494</b>

Source: Own elaboration from CICOPA data set

Information on economic activities carried out by cooperatives in the CICOPA network was collected in using the ISIC codes<sup>12</sup>. Service sectors represent 63% of all types of cooperatives, followed by industrial sectors except construction (25%) and the construction sector (10%).

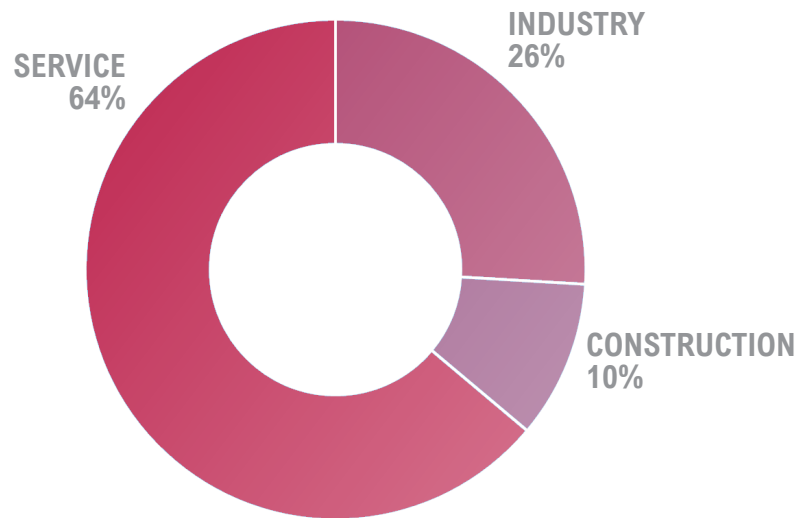
**TABLE 11**  
**ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF COOPERATIVES IN THE CICOPA NETWORK BY MAIN CATEGORIES**

Category	Asia	Europe	North America	South America	Total
INDUSTRY EXCEPT CONSTRUCTION	3,429	7,999	67	173	11,668
CONSTRUCTION	2	4,475	11	98	4,586
SERVICE	957	26,985	125	671	28,738
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,388</b>	<b>39,459</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>942</b>	<b>44,992</b>

Source: Own elaboration from CICOPA data set

<sup>12</sup> It needs to be noted that economic activity data on SAL (Spain) and worker cooperatives in the USA include information on non-member cooperatives due to their original data which did not distinguish information on member cooperatives and non-member cooperatives

**FIGURE 4**  
**QUANTITATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF COOPERATIVES IN THE CICOPA NETWORK BY MAIN CATEGORIES**



When we analyse worker cooperatives and social cooperatives, the distribution according to economic activities shows different figures. The largest sectors where worker cooperatives are present are C. Manufacturing (22.5%), G. Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (14.5%), F. Construction (10.2%).



**TABLE 12**  
**ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF WORKER COOPERATIVES BY MAIN INDUSTRIAL CODES WITHIN THE CICOPA NETWORK**  
**(PARTIAL FIGURES)**

Category	Description	Asia	Europe	North America	South America	Total
A	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	5	922	47	95	1,069
B	Mining and quarrying		55		3	58
C	Manufacturing	3,415	6,625	20	60	10,120
D	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply		131			131
E	Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	9	266		15	290
F	Construction	2	4,475	11	98	4,586
G	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	21	6,496	20	8	6,545
H	Transportation and storage	2	2,576	5	62	2,645
I	Accommodation and food service activities	44	2,665	17	5	2,731
J	Information and communication	2	1,909	30	26	1,967
K	Financial and insurance activities		209		11	220
L	Real estate activities		487		5	492
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities	5	3,855	21	22	3,903
N	Administrative and support service activities	371	2,295	6	99	2,771
O	Public administration and defence, compulsory social security		7		2	9
P	Education	8	1,262		7	1,277
Q	Human health and social work activities	494	2,033	23	77	2,627
R	Arts, entertainment and recreation		1,176	2	3	1,181
S	Other service activities	10	2,015	1	344	2,370
U	Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies				1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>39,459</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>942</b>	<b>44,992</b>	<b>942</b>

Source: Own elaboration from CICOPA data set



Social cooperatives present quite different figures. Whereas the three largest economic sectors, namely Q. Human health and social work activities (46.3%), P. Education (12.7%) and N. Administrative and support service activities (9.7%) are dominant in social cooperatives, other sectors are relatively less present.

**TABLE 13**  
**ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF SOCIAL COOPERATIVES BY MAIN INDUSTRIAL CODES (PARTIAL FIGURES)**

Category	Description	Europe	North America	Total
A	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	266	3	269
C	Manufacturing	505		505
D	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	16		16
E	Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	86		86
F	Construction	111		111
G	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	178	1	179
H	Transportation and storage	107		107
I	Accommodation and food service activities	347		347
J	Information and communication	96		96
K	Financial and insurance activities	7		7
L	Real estate activities	7		7
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities	178		178
N	Administrative and support service activities	956		956
O	Public administration and defence, compulsory social security	5		5
P	Education	1,254		1,254
Q	Human health and social work activities	4,564	8	4,572
R	Arts, entertainment and recreation	189		189
S	Other service activities	562		562
ND	Other activities	422		422
<b>Total</b>		<b>9,856</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9,868</b>

Source: Own elaboration from CICOPA data set



# TRENDS IN ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

## GENERAL TRENDS

When asked to evaluate economic indicators like production, sales, employment and the ratio between companies' creation and closures, the majority of members described positive or stable entrepreneurial trends among their cooperatives for the years 2015-2016. It is worth underlining that the economic indicator where they display the best performance is employment, holding even when there are signs of distress for other economic indicators such as production and sales and the ratio between creation and closures (see the graph below).

FIGURE 5  
ECONOMIC SITUATION 2015-2016



Among the members who reported particularly remarkable performances, it is worth mentioning the French confederation of worker cooperatives CG Scop who described, again, a positive situation for 2016, with a total of 2,991 affiliated cooperatives (+4% compared to 2015) and accounting for 53,850 workers (+ 4.2% compared to 2015). This evolution confirms the positive trends recorded in recent years, with an average of 299 new cooperatives per year in the period between 2012 and 2015. Positive trends were also reported by the Spanish confederation of worker cooperatives COCETA, especially regarding employment creation: according to the figures of the Spanish Ministry of Employment for 2015 and 2016, there was an increase of 22,800 new jobs within Spanish cooperatives (all types), almost 80% of which are worker cooperatives<sup>13</sup>.

Promising developments were also reported by other CICOPA members, although less substantial and mostly concentrated in specific sectors and activities: in Japan, especially among work integration cooperatives; in Italy, in particular among cooperatives providing services in general and social services; in the UK, where the number of worker cooperative has been continuing to grow in recent years, especially in creative industries (professional designers, artists, web developers, etc.); in Denmark, where the new start-ups were mostly in media, technological and cultural activities; in the Czech Republic, with a growth in the automotive industry, metal work, plastics and rubber; in the USA, some increase has occurred, but cannot be described as substantial yet, and the largest number of start-ups occurred in New York City, due in part to municipal funding for cooperative development<sup>14</sup>. However generally speaking, according to quantitative data, it seems that these dynamics are not directly and immediately reflected in the increase in the membership of CICOPA member organisations as yet.

Nevertheless, members pointed out signs of economic slowdown compared to the previous two-year period (2013-2014). It is worth mentioning the case of Argentina, Uruguay and Colombia in this regard. Argentinian members CNCT and FECOOTRA reported cases of distress and closures mainly due to unfavourable government measures such as opening of imports and steady increase in the cost of utilities, which has been affecting mostly the textile, metallurgy and construction sectors. On the other hand, Uruguayan member FCPU reported a downturn in production and sales and employment, associated with a general slowdown in the national economy, a situation that however began to be reversed in the second half of 2016. Unfortunately, during that period some enterprises recently converted into worker cooperatives, and still in a phase of consolidation, were negatively affected by this unfavourable context. In Colombia, due to a public policy provision which forbids an abusive use of the worker cooperative model for degrading workers' protection and rights at work, there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of worker cooperatives (2,500 cooperatives have been closed down) and related jobs (390,000 jobs have disappeared).

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<sup>13</sup> More information can be found in COCETA article available at <http://www.coceta.coop/noticias-coceta.asp?idnew=454>

<sup>14</sup> It is worth specifying that, as highlighted by our member U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives (USFWC), the number of attempted but not achieved creations of worker cooperatives in the United States is much higher than the effective number of successful start-ups. This may be explained by an inadequate entrepreneurial preparation (business plan etc.), which has drawn the attention of USFWC on the significant gap in the technical needs to support the business development of cooperatives more intensely than previously thought

Some European members have also confirmed some distress trends in continuity with the previous years: SCOP BTP, the French federation of construction cooperatives, reported an unchanged negative trend since 2008. The members from Poland, Romania and Bulgaria also confirmed a gradual downturn in jobs and start-ups. Statistical information also show that Italian worker cooperatives suffer from a gradual downturn as well, although each Italian worker cooperative federation has been unevenly affected. The downturn trends in Europe seem to be explained by structural difficulties which affect industry, particularly manufacturing and construction industries, in some countries.

## TRENDS BY SECTOR

### SERVICE SECTOR

The service sector seems to be the one growing most, and in a phase of strong diversification, being developed in a wide range of activities from media, technology and culture to education, health and social services. This phenomenon was reported on a large geographic scale even if to different degrees: in some cases, it seems to be a consolidated trend whereas other members describe it rather in terms of emerging opportunity for future start-ups, but the concrete impact is still to be measured and defined. Here below we summarize the main development trends reported by members.

French member CG Scop reported that more than one out of two cooperatives is active in the service sector, which at the end of 2015 brings together around 1,350 cooperatives and 18,400 jobs, with 100 new cooperatives and 630 new jobs. In particular, there have been remarkable increases in the education, health and social care sectors (+340 jobs in 2015). Growth trends in educational, social and health services have also been reported in Sweden, Italy, the UK, Japan, the USA, and Uruguay. This is also supported by quantitative data. Among economic sectors, Q. Human health and social work activities show a continuous growth tendency across countries. The relative stability of social cooperatives compared to worker cooperatives suffering a relative downturn needs to be understood in relation with this tendency. However, an opposite trend was reported in Spain, where employment declined by 2.4% in the care services, from the end of 2014 to the first half of 2016, because of the decrease in public budget.

Among 23 members on which information on the economic activity is available, 2,531 cooperatives among which 1,254 social cooperatives are identified in the education sector. Also, 7,199 cooperatives among which 4,572 social cooperatives are reported in the human health and social work activity sector. Cooperatives in these two sectors represent 17.7% of the total reported cooperatives.

It should be underlined that we have been observing an increasing interest within our network towards the social cooperative model, which is specialised in the provision of services of general interest (social and environmental services, education, culture etc.) or in the work integration of disadvantaged and marginalised workers (persons with disabilities, long-term unemployed, ex-prisoners, addicts etc.).



For example, Coopetín, the first Colombian social cooperative, was established in 2016. The potential expansion of this model is being explored in Argentina, where many worker cooperatives are already involved in the care, support, and reintegration of vulnerable people, but also in the UK where cooperatives could help deal with the budget shortfall for health and social care. Furthermore, our Polish member highlighted the potential represented by social cooperatives in terms of future start-ups, according to a study recently published by Euricse<sup>15</sup>, from 2006 to 2014 Polish social cooperatives developed with a 45% annual average growth, accounting for 1,269 start-ups according to recently available data.

In the CICOPA network, 10 members represent social cooperatives<sup>16</sup>. Italian social cooperatives represented by three Italian members (AGCI Solidarietà, Federsolidarietà and Lega-coop sociali) have two different types: type A for the provision of services of general interest and type B for work integration of vulnerable people. Japanese elderly persons' cooperatives represented by JWCU have the legal status of consumer cooperatives but they can be considered as multi-stakeholder cooperatives including user-members and worker-members who are mainly elderly persons. There are four CICOPA members representing cooperatives specialised in work integration of disabled persons. All work integration social cooperatives in the CICOPA network employ about 30,000 disadvantaged persons.

However, in many countries, the concept of social cooperative is not clearly defined but used to indicate cooperatives that carry out health and social care services and work integration activities. In Spain, cooperatives are not a separate cooperative type, but a secondary category according to legislation. In some cases, such as Poland and South Korea, legally defined social cooperatives are not yet fully consolidated as a movement and CICOPA members do not represent them. Therefore, the quantitative data from within the CICOPA network does not sufficiently reflect this development of social cooperatives. As examined in the quantitative part of this report, many cooperative types which might be reclassified as social cooperatives, pending deeper understanding of their models and institutional settings, would be an important field for further investigation.

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<sup>15</sup> Euricse, 2017, Selected Aspects of Social Cooperatives in Poland, Euricse Working Papers, No. 93 | 17, available at [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2940313](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2940313)

<sup>16</sup> For more information in detail, see table 9 in the Numbers and Facts section

## NEWLY EMERGING INNOVATIVE SECTORS

Interestingly, Argentina reports a new wave of development of cooperatives in the sector of Information and communications technology (ICT). Similar trends have also been highlighted in Denmark, France, Italy, the UK and Uruguay. In general, the ICT sector reflects a stable growth tendency across CICOPA members. According to our partial data, there are 2,063 cooperatives in 18 member organisations which work in the ICT sector. They represent 3.77% of all reported cooperatives.

Some members highlighted changes in the industry and construction sector and their related production chain and the growth opportunities linked to technological and environmental innovation. In Italy, important historical cooperatives have closed down, especially in the construction sector and the construction chain<sup>17</sup>, but new cooperatives are being created as the result of worker buyouts of enterprises in crisis (failure or bankruptcy) and start-ups in advanced technological sectors. COCETA (Spain) and SCOP BTP (France) highlighted the increase of construction activities linked to the environmental impact and renewable energy.

A high presence and growing trends of cooperatives involved in environmental-related activities, such as renewable energy and recycling, have also been reported in Denmark, Sweden, Argentina, the USA and Vietnam. In the UK, the interest is still high, although there has been a decline in the number of new environmental cooperatives following a sharp peak in growth in recent years.

However, despite the growing importance of activities linked to the environmental impact, it is difficult to identify cooperatives active in these fields with the current industrial classification system. It might be reasonable to use the categories of « electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply » and « water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities » as a proxy for (renewable) energy provision and recycling respectively. With the current classification system, it is not possible to distinguish cooperatives linked to technological and environmental innovation from traditional ones in the construction sector.

There are reportedly 147 cooperatives in 5 European member organisations that are active in the « electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply » sector. For the sector of « water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities », 10 member organisations reported 376 cooperatives, most of which are probably active in recycling activities.

# KEY ISSUES

Below, we focus on two topics which, in our opinion, are increasingly important and challenging for the cooperative movement: youth cooperative entrepreneurship and the “green economy”, by which we mean, in the absence of any internationally agreed definition, economic activities related to the objectives of environmental protection and low-carbon emissions.

## YOUTH COOPERATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

According to recent ILO’s statistics<sup>18</sup>, after a slight decrease between 2012 and 2015, youth unemployment rose again in 2016 up to the alarming figure of 71 million unemployed youth worldwide. Young people are disproportionately affected by working poverty and informality, in particular in emerging and developing countries where more than one-third of youth live in extreme or moderate poverty despite having a job. Furthermore, the youth are much more likely to find themselves without a job in comparison to the rest of the economically active population and the duration of unemployment among them is growing, especially in developed countries.

In this context, there has been an increasing interest in recent years about how cooperatives can be a concrete tool in the hands of young people to be freed from marginality through a redistribution of resources and common ownership, as advocated by the young cooperative leaders at the 2014 International Summit of Cooperatives through the message « Co-operate to transform society »<sup>19</sup>. While there has been a stronger visibility of young cooperative leaders at the worldwide level under the impulse and coordination of the International Cooperative Alliance’s Youth Network<sup>20</sup>, it is worth mentioning the recent creation of the European Young Cooperators Network, officially launched in 2015 in the framework of the General Assembly of Cooperatives Europe, the regional organisation of the International Cooperatives Alliance for Europe. The network aims to share knowledge and best practice, promote innovative youth cooperatives and work together to get better youth representation within the cooperative movement. Members of worker cooperatives and social cooperatives have actively participated since its very beginning: its first meeting was organised by the British worker cooperative AltGen<sup>21</sup>, the French social cooperative Solidarité Etudiante<sup>22</sup> and the organisations promoting cooperative enterprises among the youth in Italy OOP ! - Confcooperative<sup>23</sup> and Generazioni – Legacoop<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> ILO: World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Youth 2016, Geneva: ILO, 2016

<sup>19</sup> More information is available at <https://ica.coop/en/media/news/summits-young-leaders-issue-declaration-2014-international-summit-cooperatives#overlay-context>

<sup>20</sup> More information is available at <https://ica.coop/en/alliance-youth-network>

<sup>21</sup> More information is available at <http://altgen.coop/>

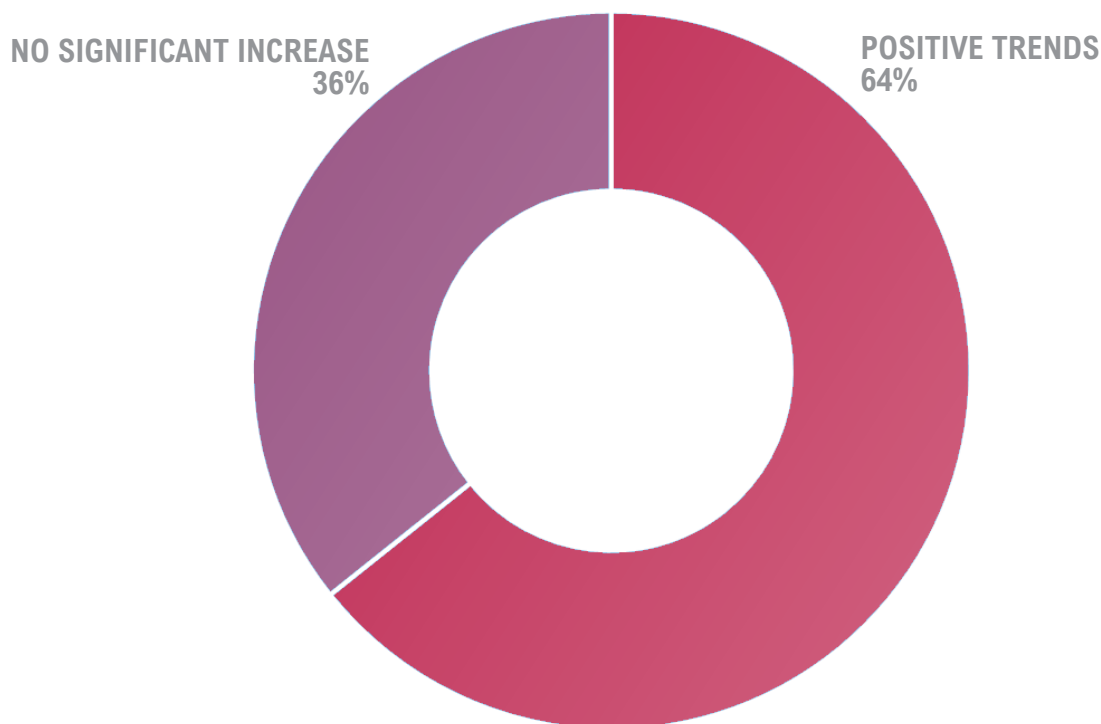
<sup>22</sup> More information is available at <http://www.solidariteetudiante.fr/>

<sup>23</sup> More information is available at <https://www.facebook.com/OOPgiovani>

<sup>24</sup> More information is available at <http://generazioni.legacoop.it/>

The recognition by CICOPA of the importance of this theme goes back to 2013, when members acknowledged that it was crucial to work on policies towards the youth, by including it in the organization's 2013-2020 strategic plan. In this framework, CICOPA launched in 2015-2016 its fundraising strategy for the launch of the campaign « We own it! » in 2017. This campaign focuses on raising awareness about how young people can meet their employment needs and aspirations while contributing to a better society through the creation of worker, social and producers' cooperatives. The campaign seeks to inspire the next generation and policy makers by means of different tools, such as a dedicated website, a study, as well as the promotion of the video « Working together for a cooperative future », which was co-produced in 2015 by CICOPA, together with its regional organizations CECOP-CICOPA Europe and CICOPA Mercosur.

**FIGURE 5**  
**CREATION OF COOPS BY YOUNG PEOPLE ACCORDING TO CICOPA MEMBERS**



Interestingly, the majority of the members who responded on this specific topic for this report highlighted a higher amount of cooperatives in industry and services created by young people in recent years or, at least, an increased interest to create such cooperatives. It is worth underlying that, in most cases, this is a perception reported by members without much evidence in terms of figures and quantified trends. In fact, most member organisations do not collect age data and this makes it difficult to get a clear picture in this regard. Some figures related to the involvement of youth in industrial and service cooperatives come from France and Spain: in France, at the end of 2015, young executives ( $\geq 35$ ) represented 15% of all executives within worker and social cooperatives. In Spain, according to recent statistics from the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, the percentage of young people working in cooperatives is 4.3% for youth under 25 and 37.5% for the class age between 25 and 39 years old. According to COCETA, youth participation in worker cooperatives in Spain show very promising trends, and this is confirmed by the fact that 80% of new members are under 35 with a high education level (figure reported in 2015)<sup>25</sup>. Whereas on the one hand we often lack data allowing us to measure quantitatively the involvement of young people in cooperatives and its evolution over the last few years, on the other we can report a variety of initiatives showing that the promotion of cooperatives among young people has become a strategic priority for the cooperative movement in many countries. We report some concrete examples below.

CJS<sup>26</sup> (French acronym for « Youth Services cooperatives ») –is a Quebec (Canada) programme in which 12-17 years old students are coached in establishing worker cooperatives over the summer as part-time jobs to do services for the local community such as lawn-mowing, painting, cleaning, etc. They are organised as small worker cooperatives that are managed by groups of ten to fifteen young people who, while creating jobs for themselves, can learn how to democratically run and operate their business in a responsible manner. This model was successfully initiated in the 1980s by RESEAU, the network of worker cooperatives in Quebec (Canada), and about 150 projects have got under way every year since then. The most recent development of this project deserves attention: in 2015, RESEAU created « Fabrique entrepreneuriale » (« entrepreneurial factory »), which brings together actors from the cooperative movement, other types of enterprises and youth organisations, with the aim of developing this model more extensively in Quebec. More recently, youth services cooperatives have also been developed in France, thanks to the transatlantic intercooperation established between the social economy actors active in the two countries. Since the launch of a first pilot project in 2013 in the French region of Brittany, the project has been expanding gradually and, in 2016, 33 such cooperatives were set up in France<sup>27</sup>, under the cooperative form of business and employment cooperatives<sup>28</sup> (CAE, « coopérative d'activités et d'emploi » in French) and the coordination of the French network Coopérer<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> More information is available at <http://empresaytrabajo.coop/nacional/coceta-lanza-el-proyecto-orientacoop-para-la-juventud/>

<sup>26</sup> More information is available at <https://www.projetcjs.coop/france/quest-ce-quune-cjs/historique-des-cjs/>

<sup>27</sup> G. Volat et A. Plaindoux, « Les Coopératives Jeunesse de Services, vers une conscience citoyenne pour les jeunes coopérants », in XVII Rencontres du RIUESS, Engagement, Citoyenneté et Développement : Comment former à l'économie sociale et solidaire ?, Marrakech, 22 au 24 mai 2017

<sup>28</sup> Business and employment cooperatives were originally designed in France as a specific form of worker cooperative allowing people to develop their own business while benefiting from full-fledged rights and protection as well as back-office services (e.g. accountancy) during a test period. Since the entry into force of the French 2014 law on social and solidarity economy, they have been recognised as a specific form of cooperative, whose members can also be those who have completed their test period and have their own business and clients, like most freelancers. For this purpose, a new status of « employee-entrepreneur » (entrepreneur-salarié), applying only to business and employment cooperatives has been introduced in the French labour code

<sup>29</sup> CG Scop, « Coopératives jeunesse de services: les jeunes s'initient à l'entrepreneuriat coopératif », Participer n°653, 26 November 2014

Another example of commitment in favour of youth cooperative entrepreneurship comes from Spain. COCETA, the Spanish confederation of worker cooperatives, has participated in a « Youth Learning and Employment Strategy 2013/2016 »<sup>30</sup>, an initiative of the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Security aimed to respond to the precarious labour situation which many young people are suffering in Spain. This strategy contains the Youth Guarantee, namely the national application of a scheme promoted by the European Commission<sup>31</sup> through which all EU countries have committed to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years (raised to 29 in Spain) receive good quality employment offer, continued education, apprenticeship and traineeship. In this framework, COCETA has launched two projects specifically intended to improve young people's access to employment and self-employment through worker cooperatives. The first one, named *Emprende.coop*<sup>32</sup> and launched in 2014, is a web portal aimed at encouraging people to set up cooperative business projects. It contains guides on how to set up a cooperative, how to write a business plan, and how to develop and put the business plan into practice (including an online tool to track development). Furthermore, the website offers an online tool that helps with the design of a business plan and other resources and documents published by the Spanish regional governments, informing users of the specifics of setting up cooperative businesses in the different regions. Secondly, COCETA has designed and launched the web portal and mobile app *Orienta.coop*, which targets young people who neither study nor work (NEET), providing them with information on the EU Youth Guarantee scheme as well as vocational guidance and training on how to set up a worker cooperative.

Similar initiatives were also developed in Italy, another country where the unemployment of young people has been worsening tremendously since the 2008 economic crisis. One example is *Coop Up!*<sup>33</sup>, the national incubator project recently launched by the Italian cooperative association *Confcooperative* for youth under 35 and for women. It offers mentoring and advisory services for the creation of new cooperatives and the development of existing ones and promotes innovation by facilitating connections among cooperatives through networking and co-working spaces. The new cooperatives incubated by *Coop Up!* can benefit from the support of the cooperative solidarity fund *Fondosviluppo*<sup>34</sup>, that can anticipate the cooperative share capital, up to a maximum amount of 30,000 euros during 5 years, at a 1.5% annual interest rate. Another example coming from the Italian cooperative movement is *Coopstartup*<sup>35</sup>, a project launched by *Coopfond* (a solidarity fund managed by the Italian cooperative association *Legacoop*) in May 2013, aimed at promoting the creation of cooperatives among young people and encouraging the presence of cooperatives in new markets. It specifically focuses on innovation (technological, organizational and social innovation) to foster « smart, sustainable and inclusive growth ».

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30 More information is available at <http://www.empleo.gob.es/es/garantiajuvenil/informate.html>

31 More information is available at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079>

32 More information is available at <http://emprende.coop/index.php>

33 More information is available at <http://www.coopup.net/>

34 In Italy, Law 59 / 1992 has established solidarity funds for the promotion and development of cooperatives allowing the national associations of cooperatives to create and manage such funds. *Fondosviluppo* and *Coopfond* were created respectively by the cooperative organisations *Confcooperative* and *Legacoop*, not only to finance but also to provide a wide range of advisory and follow-up services in different fields such as business transfers to employees under the cooperative form, as well as the creation and development of cooperatives. The resources of the funds come mainly from 3% of the annual profits of associated cooperatives, as per law 59 / 1992.

35 More information is available at <http://www.coopstartup.it/en/project>

Since its launch, it has developed different tools such as: a practical guide and free online courses for start-ups; partnerships with universities, business centres and incubators; organisation of local calls to select and support business ideas promoted by groups of potential cooperators; mentoring and provision of repayable loans, and specific financial tools for the creation of new cooperatives. Since 2013, 10 calls have been organised at the local level, 54 cooperatives have been selected and 30 new cooperatives have been launched.

In Poland, CICOPA member NAUWC is promoting cooperative culture and practices among the youngest, applying the « learning by doing » method. The project is named « Young people – ready steady go! » and consists in supporting the creation of cooperatives by pupils with the support and care of teachers. These cooperatives associate at least 10 pupils each. The range of activities which they manage can be quite wide: producing and selling goods; providing services for a school and third persons; plant-growing and stock-breeding (small livestock); picking and collecting recycling materials and selling them; promoting the cooperative concept and cooperative values in schools and neighbourhoods; organizing cultural, tourist and sport events, and many others. Actually, this practice has a long history, since the the first pupils' cooperative in Poland was established in Pszczelina near Warsaw in 1900 by Jadwiga Dziubińska – a teacher and cooperative activist. Later, in 1991, The Pupils' Cooperative Development Fund (PCDF) was established to support their development. NAUWC and PCDF often undertake joint initiatives in promoting pupils' cooperatives. For example, between 2014 and 2016, they implemented the project « Pupils' Cooperatives as a tool to enhance the entrepreneurial and citizenship attitudes among the youth »<sup>36</sup>.

## GREEN ECONOMY

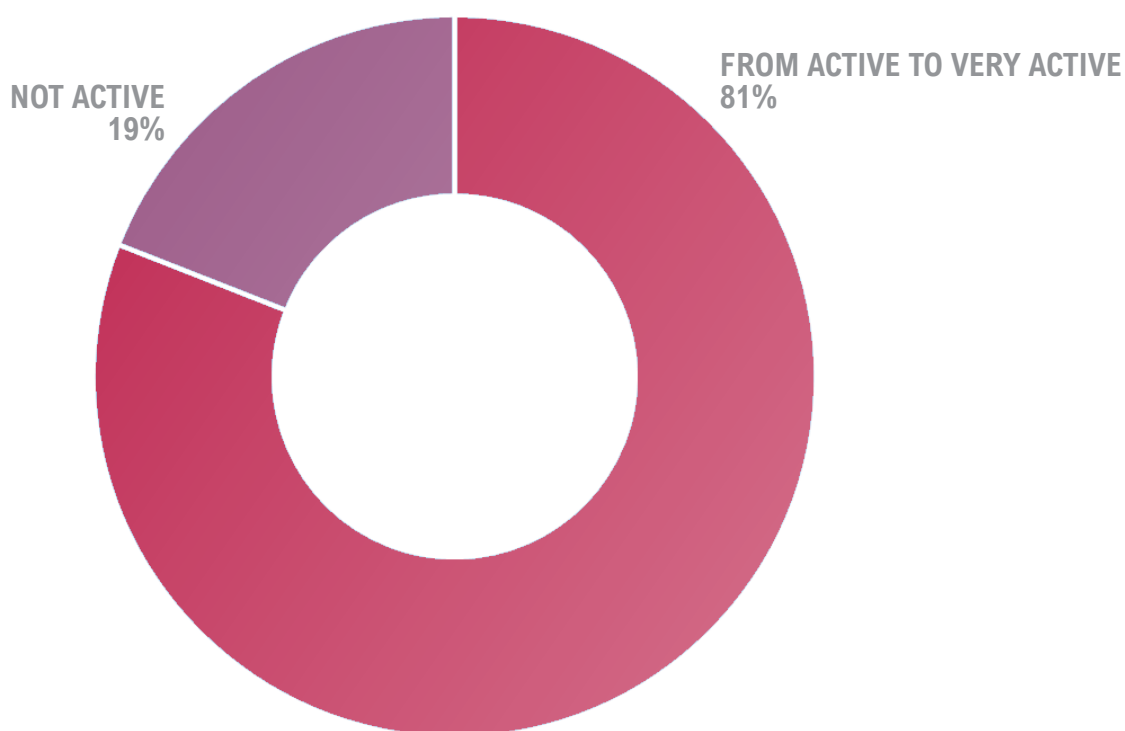
Climate change and the need to tackle the current environmental crisis are being increasingly present in the international policy agenda. Many countries are experiencing its warning effects such as extreme weather events, from which vulnerable people are often affected most. To address these challenges, the Paris Agreement, a commitment to limit global temperature below 2 degrees, was adopted on 12 December 2015 at the COP21 in Paris. On the other hand, the UN Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) strengthened the importance of moving towards more sustainable production and consumption patterns. Given these premises, what makes cooperatives a valuable ally towards a green, sustainable and competitive economy? We could argue that, considering their local roots and community concern, cooperatives are particularly suitable for a sustainable use of endogenous resources, making them the appropriate formula for developing activities linked to the promotion of the green economy. An interesting debate in this regard has been elaborated by Ariel Guarco, president of the Cooperative Confederation of the Republic of Argentina (COOPERAR) and newly elected ICA president, in his note « Co-operative Agenda to defend the planet »<sup>37</sup>, where he points out that the power and responsibility of cooperatives in this field lie in their intrinsic purpose, namely to respond to the needs of local communities. Sustainable development, argues Guarco, can be achieved if innovation is at the service of people (and not of profit in the hands of a few shareholders); therefore cooperatives appear as « an alternative to the model that generated environmental degradation and inequality ».

<sup>36</sup> For more details about Pupils' Cooperatives in Poland, consult the website (in Polish): [www.frso.pl](http://www.frso.pl)

<sup>37</sup> Available at <http://eng.arielguarco.coop/co-operative-agenda-to-defend-the-planet/>

The sectors displaying the biggest opportunities are different and the potential for the development of cooperatives in industry and services is considerable: sustainable tourism; energy; waste management; environmental education; sustainable construction and management of forests and natural areas. The big majority of CICOPA members consulted on this topic pointed out growing trends and interest in this field, and identified technological and environmental innovation as one of the new driving forces of the sectoral cooperative development in their country: in some cases, these activities are contributing to launch new emerging activities, such as renewable energy (which seems to be more consolidated in North Europe and North America but is displaying a strong development potential also in other countries such as Italy and Uruguay), or environmental services (Vietnam); in other cases, they are helping the conversion and market repositioning of activities in trouble since the 2008 economic crisis, like in the construction sector (France, Spain).

**FIGURE 6**  
**CICOPA COOPS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE GREEN ECONOMY**





An interesting « testing ground » for the development of cooperatives, in particular worker cooperatives, in the green economy is Andalusia (Spain). According to the Andalusian Federation of Worker Cooperatives (FAECTA)<sup>38</sup>, Andalusia is the Spanish autonomous community with the highest number of cooperatives and cooperative employment being created: about 4,000 cooperatives (around 18% of the total number of cooperatives in Spain), 80% of which are worker cooperatives. In addition to that, according to a study published by FAECTA in 2015<sup>39</sup>, Andalusia is the second autonomous community generating « green jobs ». 132 are the cooperatives (in their big majority worker cooperatives) active in environmental-related activities, mostly in the blue economy (maritime sector), followed by environmental services and education, recycling, ecotourism, organic farming, renewable energy and bioconstruction. While the Andalusian case illustrates emerging trends and opportunities for worker cooperatives in the green economy, other regional experiences serve as examples of practices that have been consolidated over the last decades. It is the case of forestry cooperatives in Quebec, whose history goes back to the 1930's, when they were created to improve the conditions of workers who were constrained to earn their living in very difficult conditions. Today, the Quebec Federation of Forestry Cooperatives (affiliated to CICOPA Canadian member CWCF) represents the totality of worker cooperatives and social cooperatives (called « solidarity cooperatives » in that region) active in the forest sector in Quebec. Its 40 cooperatives gather 2,700 worker-members and create jobs for approximately 3,500 individuals, generating over US\$250 million in revenue.

In fields such as recycling and waste management, worker and social cooperative have been proving a capacity to combine environmental protection with the provision of decent jobs even to the most vulnerable categories of the society. A paradigmatic experience comes from Argentina: the worker cooperative *Creando Conciencia*<sup>40</sup> (Creating Awareness), associated to CICOPA member FECOOTRA, was founded in 2005 in the Buenos Aires province, upon the initiative of a group of neighbours who were concerned about the urban management of solid waste. Since its beginning, it has been involved in the collection, sorting and recycling of waste, as well as the design and construction of plastic furniture. The majority of the cooperative founders were unemployed former urban waste pickers who had been hired by large waste collection companies, precariously and for short periods. Through the establishment of the cooperative, they could get stable jobs and capitalise their previous knowledge and commitment to the environment. Today, the cooperative associates 50 members, most of them women, and plays a leading role in the building process of the cooperative recycling sector, which has been considerably expanding in Argentina over the last few years. With the support of FECOOTRA, *Creando Conciencia* has contributed to the creation at the end of 2014 of the National Network of Waste Pickers. This network provides an integrated strategy for the entrepreneurial development of its member cooperatives as well as a joint approach in awareness raising on environmental issues. Elsewhere, like in Sweden, several work integration social cooperatives are active in fields such as recycling, gardening, and farming, employing disadvantaged people whose profile is extremely weak in the labour market.

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<sup>38</sup> « Andalucía, vanguardia del cooperativismo », available at <https://www.faecta.coop/index.php?id=29>

<sup>39</sup> « Informe sobre la economía verde y el cooperativismo en Andalucía », available at <https://www.faecta.coop/doc/Econom%C3%A1Da%20Verde%20y%20Cooperativismo.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.creandoconciencia.com.ar/>

Similarly, our Japanese member JWCU reports projects launching bio-diesel production from recycled cooking oil in Tokyo, among which the cooperative Aguriin<sup>41</sup>, a plant employing young people with mental disabilities or social fragilities that produces bio-diesel fuel produced for local enterprises, such as bus companies. JWCU is currently supporting the launch of four similar plants throughout the country but their development is quite slow because they struggle to attain a larger scale and market attractiveness. Indeed, the development reported by our members in the green economy is often slowed down by significant obstacles: the shortage of financing and strong supporting measures prevent these activities from reaching the full development of their potential, which would require considerable investments in innovation and technology.

There are some interesting initiatives promoted by our members to strengthen the capacity of their affiliated cooperatives and call for their development in this specific field. The experience reported by our member SCOP BTP, representing worker cooperatives in the construction and public works sector in France, deserves special attention. In 2015, the federation launched its Corporate Social Responsibility label, thanks to a close partnership started in 2012 with the body specialised in CSR certification Afnor<sup>42</sup>. The certification process is based on the AFAQ 26000 evaluation model, consisting of 4 steps: awareness-raising, self-evaluation, AFAQ 26000 evaluation and, finally, validation by the Labelling Committee, which is composed of representatives from the entire construction and public works branch. In the view of its promoter SCOP BTP, the recognition granted by this label can substantially raise awareness about sustainable development among cooperatives active in construction and promote their approach in this field. For this purpose, a dedicated webpage was launched<sup>43</sup>: it provides practical information about the label and good practices within the movement, including the documentation related to the first four worker cooperatives who obtained the label at the beginning of 2016.

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<sup>41</sup> The experience of Aguriin was included in the CICOPA video « Working together for a cooperative future » that can be watched [here](#)

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.afnor.org/>

<sup>43</sup> Available at <http://www.scopbtp.org/rse/>

# TACKLING CHALLENGES AND SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES

The industry and services sector faces an economic landscape that is dramatically changing. Cooperatives must get in line with important economic technological, environmental and social change, and improve their competitiveness and capacity to scale up. What kind of strategies are our members and their cooperatives putting forward to tackle these challenges and seize these opportunities? We summarize below some strategies and emblematic initiatives.

## INTERCOOPERATION

The big majority of cooperatives represented by CICOPA (more than 90%) are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). A key strategy to balance their SME dimension is the entrepreneurial cooperation among themselves, which allow to create economies of scale and reinforce their competitiveness. Although the cooperative movement has a lengthy tradition of creating innovative solutions based on the sixth cooperative principle (cooperation between cooperatives), this component still remains a challenge for the cooperative movement and needs to be further developed, as underlined by the President of CICOPA Manuel Mariscal at the IV Cooperative Summit of the Americas that took place in Montevideo (Uruguay) in November 2016. In fact, this does not apply only to cooperatives, but also to other SMEs and micro-SMEs who face the same challenges as cooperatives<sup>44</sup>. Intercooperation was at the heart of the meeting titled « Cooperatives in industry, services and energy: how to address the SME dimension, now and tomorrow? », co-organised by CICOPA and NRECA, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in the United States, as part of the International Summit of Cooperatives in Quebec in October 2016.

<sup>44</sup> More information about Manuel Mariscal's speech can be found in the article published by CICOPA Mercosur « Manuel Mariscal: « Tenemos que pensar y actuar desde la intercooperación », available at <http://cicopamerocosur.coop/manuel-mariscal-tenemos-que-pensar-y-actuar-desde-la-intercooperacion>

During this encounter, panellists coming from the industry, service and energy cooperative sectors illustrated, through their experience, how cooperatives compensate their SME size, mainly through entrepreneurial cooperation tools: using advisory services, training schemes, mutualized financial instruments, business networks, and horizontal groups<sup>45</sup>.

The examples reported here below are some of the numerous examples existing within our network that help illustrate the link between intercooperation and entrepreneurial innovation. The NETCOOP project developed by Italian CICOPA member Federlavoro is the first online network that connects Federlavoro's worker cooperatives with the goal of creating a simple, intuitive and functional network that can stimulate greater knowledge among the affiliated cooperatives and encourage entrepreneurial synergy and collaboration between them. The geo-location portal allows to quickly navigate through an interactive map where users can view and select all the cooperatives of interest across the Italian territory. In keeping with the latest technological innovations, the NETCOOP portal [www.netcoop.it](http://www.netcoop.it) is accessible to its user cooperatives from different devices (PCs, smartphones and tablets) and its contents can be integrated to those of one's website site or social network profile. NETCOOP is a double tool: it facilitates sectoral strategies based on the real needs of cooperatives, and it allows the cooperative federation Federlavoro to have a more structured, capillary and strategic view of all of the business segments of its affiliated cooperatives.

A purely sectoral initiative comes from the United Kingdom, where worker cooperatives operating in the digital sector gathered in 2016 into the network CoTech (Cooperative Technologists), in order to share skills and resources and make access to technological know-how fairer and more efficient. The idea is to be stronger together, winning contracts which they could not win otherwise, share work and, by doing so, be more efficient. The services offered to clients apply to a wide range of fields, from communication and marketing to design, branding and printing. CoTech has the ambition to increase the competitiveness of the cooperative technology sector in the UK and stimulate the creation of 10,000 new jobs by 2020 and 100,000 by 2030<sup>46</sup>.

An interesting example of inter-sectoral intercooperation comes from Argentina, where consumer and worker cooperatives launched in 2016 the first national online Central Purchasing Body (« Central de Compras »). The initiative came from the Consumer Cooperatives Federation FACC and the largest consumer cooperative in Argentina, the Cooperativa Obrera based in Bahía Blanca, and involved CICOPA member FECOOTRA, whose associated worker cooperatives are suppliers. Through the dedicated website, consumer cooperatives can buy different kinds of goods or obtain services at affordable price. On the other hand, the tool allows worker cooperatives to reach out to a large group of potential customers and increase their sales<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> More information about the main outcomes of the encounter can be found in the article published by CICOPA « SME cooperatives use intercooperation tools to remain strong and transform society », contained in the Special Dossier « The power of inter-cooperation », Sep-Oct-Nov 2016. Available at [http://www.cicopa.coop/wt/WT\\_September-November-2016\\_EN.html](http://www.cicopa.coop/wt/WT_September-November-2016_EN.html)

<sup>46</sup> See the website <https://www.coops.tech>

<sup>47</sup> More information can be found at <https://www.faccargentina.coop/central-de-compras.html>

At the transnational level, it is worth mentioning the Transatlantic agreement for worker cooperatives signed in 2015 by two CICOPA members: Canada's CWCF and France's CG Scop. The agreement is aimed to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise on worker cooperatives and in particular on how to accompany business transfers to employees in the cooperative form. As a concrete follow-up of this agreement, CWCF obtained in 2016 a permission from CG Scop to adapt their website on business transfer for its member RESEAU, the network of worker cooperatives in Quebec<sup>48</sup>. Furthermore, CWCF has obtained funding for its translation and adaptation for the rest of Canada.

## TURNING TO INNOVATIVE SECTORS

As we saw earlier in this report, a certain number of members highlighted new interesting developments regarding cooperatives in innovative sectors such as information and communications technology (ICT). These recent years have seen a growing interest towards the relationship between cooperatives and the digital economy, and the increasing attention towards cooperative platforms is quite illustrative of this trend. Although it is not the purpose of this report to analyse this issue, we would like to mention some experiences existing within our network that help illustrate the increasing importance of these innovative activities for our sector.

The Uruguayan cooperative movement signed an agreement with the government in 2015 for the identification and promotion of strategic sectors for cooperatives. As an outcome of this agreement, Incubacoop<sup>49</sup> was created to accompany the creation of new cooperatives in innovative and knowledge-intensive industries. In 2016, a specific call was addressed to Uruguayan pre-cooperatives or cooperatives that are in a stage of initial design of entrepreneurial projects in the following areas: life sciences (biotechnology, food technology, fine chemistry, nanotechnology, and pharmacy), information and communications technology (IT, audio-visual, robotics), but also graphic design and many others. The selected applicants will benefit from financial assistance, training and advisory services during the development stage of the cooperative. The process is meant to take place during a maximum period of two years, after which the cooperative must leave the Incubator<sup>50</sup>.

Whereas on the one hand it is important to take full advantage of the new technologies for the creation of a new « cooperative technology sector », on the other hand it is worth spreading and consolidating the use of these technologies to boost innovation and consolidate already existing cooperatives. An emblematic initiative in this field was carried out by Si Se Puede! (We can do it!), a women-owned worker cooperative specialised in housecleaning services in New York, seeking innovation to reach a broader array of clients. The cooperative collaborated with a group of researchers from Cornell Tech graduate school for the development of an app named Coopify<sup>51</sup>. The launched app allows clients to access the offer of home-care cooperatives in New York avoiding the bottleneck of office managers for booking. Without such intermediaries, money goes directly to workers, thus allowing low-income workers to penetrate and benefit from the tech « sharing economy » potential. Coopify has converted itself into a cooperative.

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48 See the website [www.transfertcoop.com](http://www.transfertcoop.com)

49 <http://www.incubacoop.org.uy>

50 <http://negocios.elpais.com.uy/negocios/empresas/incubacoop-convoca-formar-cooperativas-base-tecnologica.html>

51 <https://community-wealth.org/content/coopify-new-platform-bringing-broad-based-ownership-your-smartphone>

On the other side of the Atlantic, the French worker cooperative movement has started paying special attention to the emerging opportunities related to the digital economy. Beside a dedicated committee called « Cooperatives and the digital economy » created with the purpose of working on possible development axis within the network, a new investment fund called CoopVenture<sup>52</sup> has been designed for the development of enterprises in this sector (cooperatives or enterprises willing to become cooperatives). The investment intervenes through equity funds during 3-5 years and, after this period, the beneficiary cooperatives are requested not to buy back the shares (which would penalize their investment capacity), but the shares of the investment fund, that can be either reinvested in the business or in new ones, and serve future generations of enterprises in the same sector.

## FINANCING

In compliance with the sixth cooperative principle (cooperation among cooperatives), various financing instruments with different degrees of sophistication have been developed within the cooperative movement over the last decades to support the development of cooperatives and cope with the difficulties in accessing bank loans. Some of them are addressed to all types of cooperatives; others are specifically designed for worker cooperatives. They can attain a substantial level of capitalization, a high repayment rate and a high level of cost-efficiency. They are totally not-for-profit since, unlike most investing systems, they do not seek profit for the investor. They are particularly strong in countries having a long-standing history of our cooperative sector (such as Italy, Spain and France). However, among the most recent initiatives, it is worth mentioning the Workers' Cooperatives Solidarity Fund<sup>53</sup> (Solid Fund), in the UK. Designed by a group of worker cooperatives in late 2014 and developed soon afterwards, it is paid by the voluntary subscriptions of individual worker cooperatives' members, worker cooperatives or other organisations supporting industrial democracy and collective ownership. The fund provides support for training, networking, and promotion activities developed by and for worker cooperatives in the UK. So far, it has attained a fund balance of £60,394 and 535 subscribers.

In spite of progress made in developing these mechanisms, especially in some countries, the lack of funds in starting and operating a business still remain a significant obstacle for cooperatives in industry and services. New capitalization mechanisms like crowd-funding and savings within civil society are also beginning to emerge, allowing to attain a higher scale in investment capacity. In France, CICOPA member CG Scop has launched in 2016 a crowd-funding campaign « I finance a cooperative project »<sup>54</sup> in order to attract funding and raise awareness among the general public about cooperative entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, the development of cooperative financial instruments, or other capitalization mechanisms such as the more recent crowd-funding, should not be seen as an exclusive way for financing cooperative enterprises, but complementary to bank loans, too often inaccessible and which cooperative organisations keep advocating strongly.

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<sup>52</sup> <http://coopventure.fr/#map>

<sup>53</sup> <http://solidfund.coop/about>

<sup>54</sup> [www.jefinanceunprojetcooperatif.fr](http://www.jefinanceunprojetcooperatif.fr)

## IDENTITY BUILDING, AWARENESS RISING AND NETWORKING

As emphasized in the programmatic document of the ICA « Blueprint for a cooperative decade »<sup>55</sup>, one of the most crucial challenges of the cooperative movement lies in its capacity to build a common cooperative message and ensure that cooperatives are seen and understood by everybody. This includes both an internal and external dimension: the creation of a « powerful sense of shared identity » within the cooperative movement itself, as well as the projection of an identifiable cooperative message outside. The identity building process can take different forms and use a wide range of channels: common symbols, education and training programs; meetings and events; communication campaigns, etc. We mention here below some relevant initiatives reported by our members in this field.

Argentinian member CNCT launched in 2016 a campaign called « Buy cooperative », whose aim is to challenge citizens, in their dual role of consumer and worker, and make them aware that « through the power of purchasing as consumers, we have the possibility to choose the type of development we promote. Buying cooperative, we support and protect Argentinian work, we guarantee the absence of slave labour, we help to increase jobs and we avoid the flight of capital linked to financial maximization », as explained to journalists by CNCT president Christian Miño<sup>56</sup>. CNCT carried out the campaign through promotional events in different municipalities and organised an itinerant fair. The campaign obtained significant results, like in Tigre (Buenos Aires Province) where the itinerant fair took place: the orders increased by 30% as a result of the fair, and the production grew consequently.

In Bulgaria, the European Forum on Social Entrepreneurship in Plovdiv (Bulgaria) co-organized by CECOP, the regional organisation of CICOPA for Europe, with its Bulgarian member-NUWPC, has now become an annual and unique event. This initiative started very modestly five years ago, but quickly established itself: since 2012, the exhibition has developed into a real international event including a conference, roundtable discussions and a European fair. In 2016, participants in the European fair were about 100 cooperatives and social enterprises from Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, Romania, Spain and Turkey, and the number of visitors amounted to 30,000.

<sup>55</sup> [https://ica.coop/sites/default/files/media\\_items/ICA%20Blueprint%20-%20Final%20version%20issued%207%20Feb%202013.pdf](https://ica.coop/sites/default/files/media_items/ICA%20Blueprint%20-%20Final%20version%20issued%207%20Feb%202013.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> <https://trabajocooperativo.com.ar/2017/04/04/882>

Another initiative quickly developing over the last few years by one of our members is the Social Cooperatives International School organised by Federsolidarietà, one of the Italian federations of social cooperatives, with the promotional support of CICOPA. The School, with a high entrepreneurial profile and specifically addressed to cooperatives' managers, has been annually renewed since the successful edition held in Bertinoro in 2014 and has become international since 2015, extending the participation to social cooperators from all over the world. This responds to an increasing need to provide the social cooperative movement with an international space for debate and exchange. The 2016 edition, held in Naples, was attended by 30 cooperative managers from Italy, Japan, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Slovenia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Turkey. It was a unique opportunity for discussion and dialogue on topical issues such as local development, partnership between social cooperatives and conventional enterprises, financial instruments for the development of social cooperatives and the role of social cooperatives in handling new societal challenges such as migrations<sup>57</sup>.





# POLICY ISSUES

## KEY FACTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

When asked about the main thorny policy challenges and advocated measures, CICOPA members reported information that we could classify under two main categories: regulatory issues and policies for the development of cooperatives. Below we briefly present concrete examples of the main achievements, challenges and policy claims reported by members under these two aspects.

### REGULATORY ISSUES

Argentinean member FECOOTRA and Japanese member JWCU complained about the absence of specific worker cooperative legislation. In this regard, our Japanese member reported that « Japan is one of the few developed countries that have neither a general law on cooperatives, nor a worker cooperative law, nor a law on social cooperatives, although these cooperatives exist and provide a valuable contribution, especially in the provision of care services and work integration ». It is worth adding in this respect that, actually, national legislation on worker cooperatives is rather rare in the world (except for a few exceptions such as Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, South Korea and Brazil). In other countries, worker cooperatives can develop in spite of specific regulation, provided that there is at least a general law on cooperatives or a general regulatory framework which is coherently applied to all cooperatives, worker cooperatives included. Members providing feedback on regulation generally call for improvements or changes in existing cooperative laws: in Poland, NAUWC requests a decrease of the minimum number of members in a cooperative (from 10 to 5), which would certainly impact positively on the development of worker cooperatives, which are SMEs in their big majority and whose needs in terms of initial membership base are different from other types of cooperatives (such as consumer cooperatives); in Uruguay, FCPU calls for a normative framework allowing social cooperatives, who are in their big majority work integration social cooperatives, to be converted into worker cooperatives, which of course would represent a big progress in cooperative development.

In turn, some members highlighted some achievements and progress in the cooperative regulatory framework and its application in their country. Let us briefly see some examples:

- > The French member CG Scop the Law reported some initiatives resulting from the Social and Solidarity Economy law approved in 2014: 1) the creation of the first transitional worker cooperative<sup>58</sup> (« SCOP d'amorçage » in French), namely a new tool for workers' buyouts under the cooperative form, according to which employees can be minority shareholders for up to seven years before becoming majority shareholders, while they gradually regain control of their company with the help of non-cooperative stakeholders; 2) the creation of the first worker cooperative group<sup>59</sup>; 3) last but not least, the legal recognition of the « CAE », acronym for « coopérative d'activités et d'emploi » (business and employment cooperative), introducing the status of entrepreneur-employee.
- > The third sector<sup>60</sup> reform approved by the Italian Parliament in June 2016, applied to third sector organisations, among which social cooperatives. Among other things, this reform 1) makes easier for property and real estate to be entrusted to the third sector. Any disused public buildings or property that has been confiscated from organised crime organisations or cultural and environmental assets which have the potential to be developed and which are in the possession of a region may be entrusted to organisations in the third sector which represent new potential for regeneration and local development; 2) introduces a series of financial levers to promote the start-up and development of third sector organisations; 3) social cooperatives and their consortia are granted the legal status of social enterprises.
- > In Spain, a new law regulating *Sociedades laborales*<sup>61</sup> (a type of enterprises owned by their workers) was approved in 2015, providing more participation and protection for the labor member workers and easier administrative procedures for their management.
- > The State of California passed a worker cooperative law in 2015. This law allow existing worker cooperatives (incorporated under the Consumer Cooperative Corporation Law) to acquire the status of worker cooperative<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> <http://www.les-scop.coop/sites/fr/espace-presse/communique-scop-amorçage%20>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.les-scop-idf.coop/actualite-presse/communiqués-de-presse/20160708.calice-premier-groupe-cooperatif.htm>

<sup>60</sup> The law applies to volunteer organizations, associations, philanthropic bodies, social enterprises (including social cooperatives), associative networks and mutuals

<sup>61</sup> [https://www.boe.es/diario\\_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2015-11071](https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2015-11071)

<sup>62</sup> [http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160AB816](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB816)

Still in the regulation field, another crucial issue for many members seems to be the access to public procurement, which has been mainly underlined by members from Europe and South America. In this specific regard, we should remember that in 2014 the European Parliament adopted a new legislation on public procurement to be transposed by European Member States. The most interesting aspects for cooperatives can be summarized as follows: the criterion of the « most economically advantageous tender » was introduced, allowing public authorities to put more emphasis on quality, social aspects, environmental considerations or innovation in enterprises' offers (although the price remains the main factor); the division of contracts into lots and the reduction of administrative burden by 80%, allowing an easier access for SMEs; the adoption of the article on reserved contracts that provide the possibility for public authorities to restrict tenders to enterprises whose aim is the social and professional integration of disabled and disadvantaged persons, which of course represents a big opportunity for work integration social cooperatives. Since its entry into force, European members States had two years to implement the new legislation into national law. A state of the art of the implementation of the 2014 and its impact for our European network certainly deserves an accurate and dedicated analysis.

Last but not least, a recurring issue reported by our members, renewed during this last consultation, is the need for a more favourable environment for cooperatives, mainly in the fields of financing, taxes and bureaucracy. We would like to mention a significant achievement reported in this regard by our Colombian members CONFECOOP and ASCOOP: a structural tax reform was introduced in 2016 and, in view of this, the cooperative movement had worked hard to ensure that tax incentives in the area of income tax were not eliminated for cooperative enterprises. Finally, the reform did not eliminate the special income tax regime for cooperatives, leaving an income tax rate of 20% calculated from a different base from that of conventional companies. It should be noted that a specific tax regime for cooperatives should not be understood as a privilege but rather as a recognition of the special contribution of cooperatives in terms of positive socio-economic externalities, and of the cost of such externalities for the cooperative.

## POLICIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATIVES

While working on this report, we obtained invaluable information about emerging opportunities for the development of our sector, which seems to be at a turning point, especially in some countries. We will mention here two cases that called our attention and may deserve future monitoring.

VCA, our new Vietnamese member, provided us with interesting information about the state of the art of recent cooperative regulation in Vietnam and its potential impact on our sector. Significant initiatives have been implemented by the Vietnamese government over the last few years: a new cooperative law aimed at the modernisation of cooperatives was approved in 2012<sup>63</sup> and a development plan was launched for the 2016-2020 period, with the purpose of supporting « new-style » cooperatives in agriculture, industry and services, especially in rural areas<sup>64</sup>. What deserves particular attention is the focus of these initiatives on facilitating the conversion from pre-cooperatives (like informal self-help groups) in rural areas to duly-registered cooperatives, and that new opportunities are emerging through this development path in strategic sectors such as environment and tourist services.

<sup>63</sup> <http://cpdhost.cpd.go.th/cpd/thaiaseancoop/download/Thai/Law/vietnam%20coop%20law%202012.pdf>

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/English/strategies/strategiesdetails?categoryId=30&articleId=10057712>

So far, there is no precise report on the exact number of cooperatives which have been converted from pre-cooperatives to duly-registered cooperatives and the process is not being implemented without difficulties, mostly because of the transfer of policies from central to local levels. However, the future development of these initiatives deserves our attention and could bring light on the role played by cooperatives in the transition from the informal to the formal economy.

The Colombian peace process represents an emblematic opportunity to position cooperatives as an entrepreneurial model for improving the quality of life of the Colombian people, « not only because the model can serve for the organization of diverse population groups that will face a multiplicity of needs, but also because the existing cooperatives, due to their experience, can actively participate in processes of construction of the social fabric in the local communities »<sup>65</sup>.

The role of cooperatives in the peace-building process has strongly been advocated by the cooperative movement and strategically defined by our member Confecoop in the 2016 work program called « Cooperatives for Colombia 2016-2020. Our contribution for Peace! »<sup>66</sup>. This programme contains a series of public policy guidelines presented to the national government in order to facilitate the construction of a normative framework that will allow the strengthening of existing cooperatives, and the creation of new and more cooperatives in the local communities. Some points have a high relevance for our sector: 1) the development of rural areas of cooperatives providing services to farmers; 2) the creation of cooperatives of SMEs and individual producers; 3) the creation of cooperatives among young people, in particular individual producers' cooperatives and worker cooperatives, especially in emerging sectors such as tourism, arts, entertainment and recreation, environmental protection, etc.; 4) the development of social cooperatives, in particular those aimed at the social and work integration of vulnerable persons such as the victims of the armed conflict (displaced women and others).

Last but not least, the programme calls for the elimination of all regulation discriminating against cooperatives, and explicitly mentions the case of worker cooperatives whose capacity to operate and develop has been strongly limited in Colombia by a Decree approved in 2011 against the abusive use of the worker cooperative model.

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<sup>65</sup> Confecoop, « Informe de Desempeño de las Cooperativas 2016 », p. 103. Available at [http://confecoop.coop/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Info\\_Desempe%C3%B1o\\_2016.pdf](http://confecoop.coop/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Info_Desempe%C3%B1o_2016.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> <http://confecoop.coop/site/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Propuestas-para-el-Gobierno.pdf>

## KEY FACTS AT THE WORLDWIDE LEVEL

Here below, we briefly sift through some of the most significant advocacy facts and initiatives undertaken by CICOPA in 2015 and 2016 to defend the interests of its members at the worldwide level.

> In September 2015, 194 countries of the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Development Agenda titled « Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development », to end poverty, and promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the diversity of the private sector and mentions cooperatives as part of it, acknowledging its role in the implementation of the goals, which means that States should be aware that achieving the goals without cooperatives is impossible. Through the document « Cooperatives as builders of sustainable development »<sup>67</sup>, CICOPA had previously highlighted that equal wealth redistribution resulting from stable jobs and an equitable access to goods and services were a specific contribution of cooperatives in industry and services to sustainable development. The study was presented to UNDESA during a visit to the UN headquarters in New York in February 2015 by the CICOPA Secretary General, together with the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Director of Policy. At the end of 2016, CICOPA contributed substantially to the ICA's declaration on SDGs, which was formally handed over to the United Nations.

> The document produced by CICOPA « Cooperatives are key to the transition from the informal to the formal economy »<sup>68</sup> argued that the cooperative entrepreneurial model is particularly adapted to lifting people out of poverty and carrying out the transition to the formal economy. It was distributed among delegates at the 104th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) held in June 2015, when Recommendation n° 204 concerning the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy was approved by 484 votes in favour and garnered outstanding support from the ILO's tripartite constituents (government, employer and worker representatives). CICOPA was present as an observer in the Committee discussing the recommendation in the name of the ICA. Cooperatives are mentioned in this Recommendation as part itself of the transition, both in terms of enterprises and in terms of employment. This text is the result of discussions which took place in a dedicated committee composed of governments, trade unions and employers organizations, to which CICOPA was present in representation of the ICA<sup>69</sup>.

> CICOPA was present as an observer in ICA's name also in the Committee on SMEs at the 2015 session of the ILC, and successfully advocated the insertion of 5 references to cooperatives in the « Conclusions on Small and Medium Scale Enterprises and Decent and Productive Employment Creation »<sup>70</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> Available at: [www.cicopa.coop/IMG/pdf/cooperatives\\_as\\_builders\\_of\\_sustainable\\_development\\_en\\_cicopaweb.pdf](http://www.cicopa.coop/IMG/pdf/cooperatives_as_builders_of_sustainable_development_en_cicopaweb.pdf)

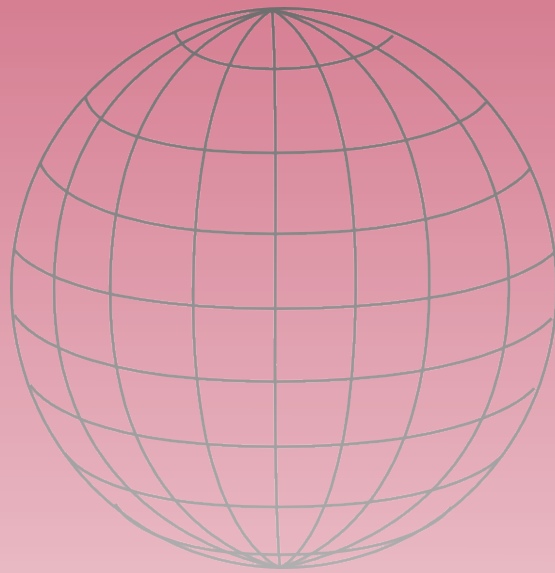
<sup>68</sup> [http://www.cicopa.coop/Cooperatives-are-key-to-the.html?var\\_mode=calcul](http://www.cicopa.coop/Cooperatives-are-key-to-the.html?var_mode=calcul)

<sup>69</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_377776.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_377776.pdf)

<sup>70</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_375357.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_375357.pdf)

> With the increased attention to cooperative statistics, a series of actions were carried out by different international institutions, such as the ILO, FAO, UNDESA and ICA under the leadership of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC, an entity grouping these institutions) over the last few years. In 2016, COPAC established a Technical Working Group to advance these actions in a concerted way and launched some research projects that will contribute to a report on cooperative statistics aiming at being adopted at the 20th International Conference on Labour Statisticians in October 2018. Based on its experience from the internal data collection and its first Employment Report, CICOPA started in 2016 to engage in these actions in its own name or, in some cases, on behalf of the ICA. The first Employment Report served as baseline data for a mapping research on cooperative statistics, produced by the ILO. Together with the ILO, CICOPA conducted five country case studies on cooperative statistics in 2015-2016. A multi-stakeholder meeting in which international institutions, national cooperative movements, governments, national statistics offices and researchers got together to discuss issues related to cooperative statistics, was organized under the moderation of CICOPA, at the headquarter of FAO in Rome, in April, 2016. CICOPA's data analyst has worked since then as part of COPAC Technical Working Group which resulted from this multi-stakeholder meeting.

> In a global context marked by a massive increase in the flow of migrants and refugees, CICOPA made in 2016 a Declaration on Migrants and Refugees<sup>71</sup>, through which it expressed its commitment to fight for equal access services and work opportunities provided by cooperatives, allowing for a decent life and increased opportunities for the entrepreneurial projects around the world.



# OUR NETWORK: OUR MEMBERS WORLDWIDE

A sectoral organization of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) since 1947, CICOPA is the International organization of industrial and service cooperatives. CICOPA gathers 48 members from 32 countries including organizations promoting cooperatives and national representative organisations affiliating around 65,000 industrial and service cooperatives providing an estimated 4 million jobs across the world. CICOPA has two regional organizations: CECOP-CICOPA Europe and CICOPA Americas. CICOPA Americas has two sub-regional organizations: CICOPA North America and CICOPA Mercosur.





A stylized map of North America in shades of blue. Four callout boxes are positioned over the map: Canada (top left), USA (middle left), Mexico (bottom left), and Puerto Rico (right side). Each box contains the name of the country/territory, the acronym of the federation, and the full name of the federation.

**CANADA**

**CWCF**

CANADIAN WORKER COOPERATIVES FEDERATION

**USA**

**USFWC**

UNITED STATES FEDERATION OF WORKER COOPERATIVES

**MEXICO**

**CNC**

CONFEDERACIÓN NACIONAL COOPERATIVA  
DE ACTIVIDADES DIVERSAS DE LA  
REPÚBLICA MEXICANA

**PUERTO RICO**

LIGA DE COOPERATIVAS  
DE PUERTO RICO\*



**COLOMBIA**

**ASCOOP**

ASOCIACIÓN DE COOPERATIVAS DE COLOMBIA

**CONFECOOP**

CONFEDERACIÓN DE COOPERATIVAS DE COLOMBIA

**BRAZIL**

**OCB**

ORGANIZAÇÃO DAS COOPERATIVAS BRASILEIRAS

**UNISOL**

CENTRAL DE COOPERATIVAS E EMPREENDIMENTOS SOLIDÁRIOS

**BOLIVIA**

**COBOCE** (ASSOCIATE MEMBER)

COOPERATIVA BOLIVIANA DE CEMENTO, INDUSTRIAS Y SERVICIOS

**PARAGUAY**

**CONPACOOOP** (ASSOCIATE MEMBER)

CONFEDERACIÓN PARAGUAYA DE COOPERATIVAS

**ARGENTINA**

**CNCT**

CONFEDERACIÓN NACIONAL DE COOPERATIVAS DE TRABAJO

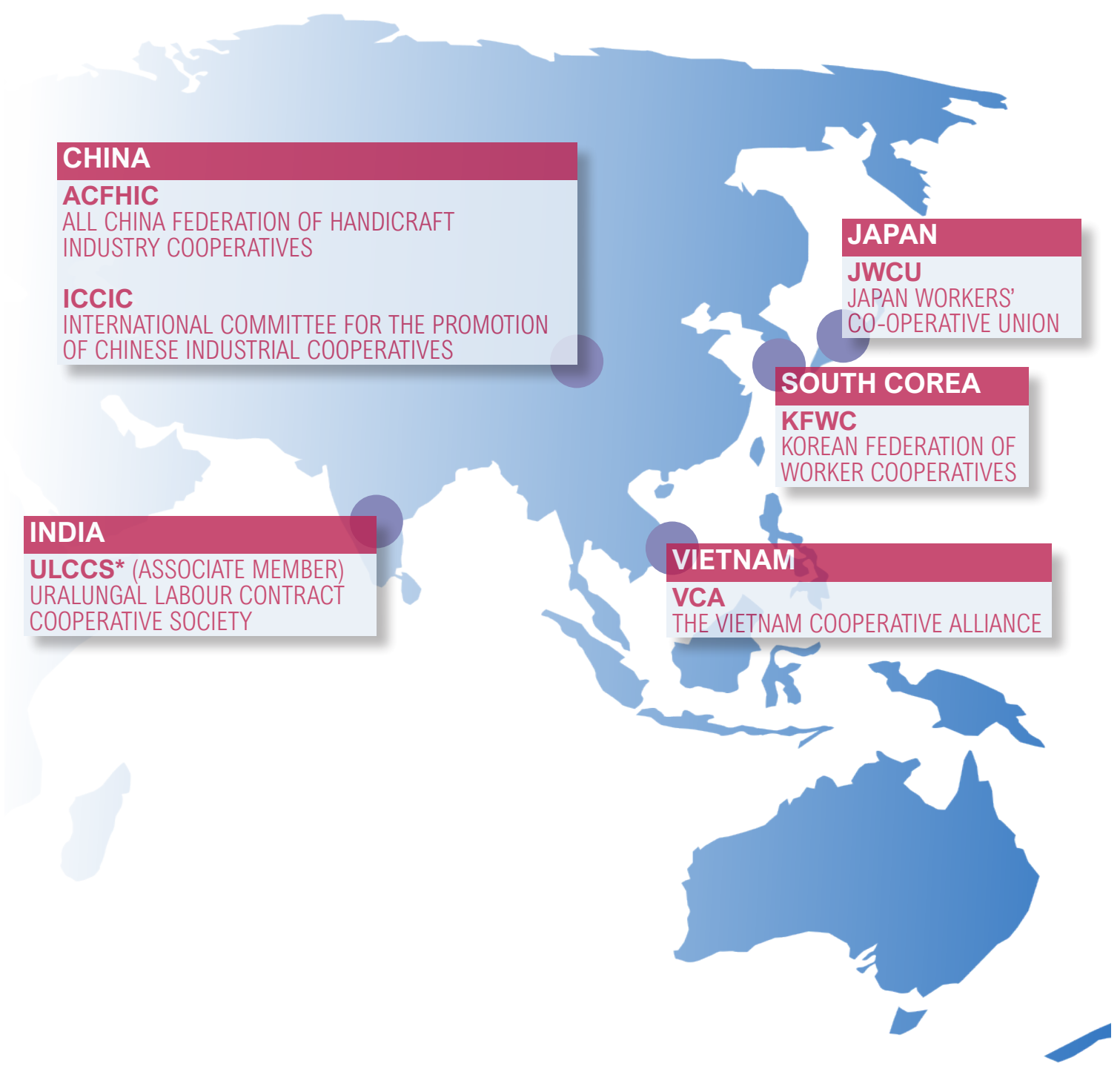
**FECOOTRA**

FEDERACIÓN DE COOPERATIVAS DE TRABAJO

**URUGUAY**

**FCPU**

FEDERACIÓN DE COOPERATIVAS DE PRODUCCIÓN DEL URUGUAY



**CHINA**

**ACFHIC**

ALL CHINA FEDERATION OF HANDICRAFT  
INDUSTRY COOPERATIVES

**ICCIC**

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROMOTION  
OF CHINESE INDUSTRIAL COOPERATIVES

**JAPAN**

**JWCU**

JAPAN WORKERS'  
CO-OPERATIVE UNION

**SOUTH KOREA**

**KFWC**

KOREAN FEDERATION OF  
WORKER COOPERATIVES

**INDIA**

**ULCCS\*** (ASSOCIATE MEMBER)  
URALUNGAL LABOUR CONTRACT  
COOPERATIVE SOCIETY

**VIETNAM**

**VCA**

THE VIETNAM COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE

\*INFORMATION ON MEMBERS AFFILIATED IN 2017 IS NOT INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT

## BELGIUM

**DIESIS** (ASSOCIATE MEMBER)  
THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AND  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

**SMART\*** (ASSOCIATE MEMBER)

## BULGARIA

**NUWPC**  
NATIONAL UNION OF WORKERS'  
PRODUCTIVE CO-OPERATIVES

## CZECH REPUBLIC

**SCMVD**  
UNION OF CZECH AND MORAVIAN  
PRODUCERS' COOPERATIVES

## DENMARK

**KOOPERATIONEN**  
KOOPERATIONEN DET KOOPERATIVE  
FÆLLESFORBUND

## FINLAND

**COOP FINLAND**

## FRANCE

**CGSCOP**  
CONFÉDÉRATION GÉNÉRALE DES SOCIÉTÉS  
SOOPÉRATIVES ET PARTICIPATIVES

**FÉDÉRATION SCOP BTP** (ASSOCIATE MEMBER)  
FÉDÉRATION DES SOCIÉTÉS COOPÉRATIVES ET  
PARTICIPATIVES DU BÂTIMENT ET DES TRAVAUX PUBLICS

**CRÉDIT COOPÉRATIF\*** (ASSOCIATE MEMBER)

## ITALY

**AGCI PRODUZIONE E SERVIZI** DI LAVORO

**AGCI SOLIDARIETÀ**

**ANCPL**  
ASSOCIAZIONE NAZIONALE DELLE COOPERATIVE  
DI PRODUZIONE E LAVORO

**CFI** (ASSOCIATE MEMBER)  
COOPERAZIONE, FINANZA IMPRESA

**CONFCOOPERATIVE**  
CONFEDERAZIONE COOPERATIVE ITALIANE

**FEDERSOLIDARIETÀ** (ASSOCIATE MEMBER)

**FEDERLAVORO E SERVIZI** (ASSOCIATE MEMBER)

**LEGACOOOP SERVIZI**

**LEGACOOOP SOCIALI**

**MALTA**

**KOOPERATTIVI MALTA**

**POLAND**

**NAUWC**

NATIONAL AUDITING UNION OF WORKERS' CO-OPERATIVES

**PORTUGAL**

**FENACERCI**

FEDERAÇÃO NACIONAL DE COOPERATIVAS DE SOLIDARIEDADE SOCIAL

**ROMANIA**

**UCECOM**

NATIONAL UNION OF HANDICRAFT AND PRODUCTION CO-OPERATIVES OF ROMANIA

**SLOVAKIA**

**CPS**

**SPAIN**

**COCETA**

CONFEDERACIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE COOPERATIVAS DE TRABAJO ASOCIADO

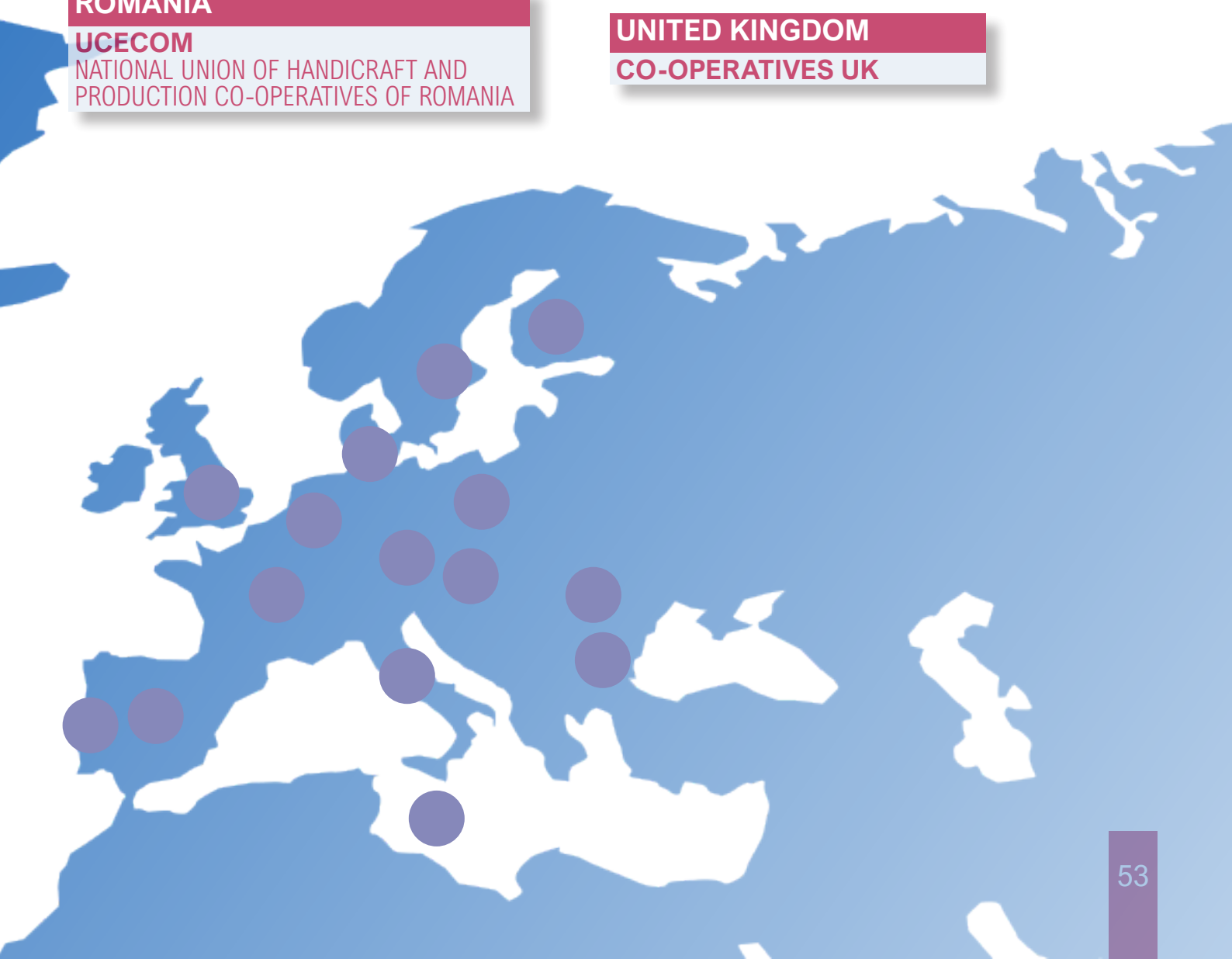
**CONFESAL** (ASSOCIATE MEMBER)  
CONFEDERACIÓN EMPRESARIAL DE SOCIEDADES LABORALES

**SWEDEN**

**COOMPANION** (ASSOCIATE MEMBER)

**UNITED KINGDOM**

**CO-OPERATIVES UK**



# CICOPA

CICOPA, the international organisation of industrial and service cooperatives represents 65,000 of worker, social and producers' cooperatives providing 4 million jobs across the world. Many of those cooperatives are worker cooperatives, namely cooperatives where the members are the staff of the enterprise, i.e., worker-members. Those enterprises are characterised by a distinctive type of labour relations, called « worker ownership », different from the one experienced by conventional employees or by the self-employed. Two growing typologies of cooperatives represented by CICOPA are social cooperatives, namely cooperatives whose mission is the delivery of goods or services of general interest, and cooperatives of self-employed producers. CICOPA currently has a total of 48 members in 32 countries. CICOPA has two regional organisations: CECOP- CICOPA Europe and CICOPA Americas.