Basic information

2012/2321(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Contribution of cooperatives to overcoming the crisis **Subject** 3.40 Industrial policy 3.45.07 Social economy, mutual societies, cooperatives, associations	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	TOIA Patrizia (S&D)	14/11/2012
	Shadow rapporteur CANCIAN Antonio (PPE) JOHANSSON Kent (ALDE) TURMES Claude (Verts /ALE) FORD Vicky (ECR) ZUBER Inês Cristina (GUE /NGL)	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs	TAJANI Antonio

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
15/01/2013	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
30/05/2013	Vote in committee		
12/06/2013	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0222/2013	Summary
01/07/2013	Debate in Parliament		
02/07/2013	Decision by Parliament	T7-0301/2013	Summary
02/07/2013	Results of vote in Parliament		
02/07/2013	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2012/2321(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ITRE/7/11453

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE506.085	27/02/2013	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE507.938	12/04/2013	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0222/2013	12/06/2013	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0301/2013	02/07/2013	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2013)627	28/11/2013	

Contribution of cooperatives to overcoming the crisis

2012/2321(INI) - 12/06/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the own-initiative report by Patrizia TAOIA (S&D, IT) on the contribution of cooperatives to overcoming the crisis.

Members note that cooperatives play an essential role in the European economy by combining profitability with solidarity, and they should benefit from a clearer and more coherent legislative framework. There are in the EU about 160 000 cooperative enterprises owned by 123 million members and providing jobs for 5.4 million people. Cooperatives contribute, on average, around **5 % to the GDP of each Member State**. The committee recalls that over the past few years, several hundred industrial and service cooperative enterprises have been established as the result of the **restructuring of businesses in crisis or without successors**, thereby re-developing local economic activities and jobs. The cooperative model has grown significantly in sectors such as social and health care services, digital and business support services and services of general interest previously provided by the public sector (e.g. environmental services, and production of energy from renewable sources in implementation of the priorities for 2020 set out in the Renewable Energy Sources Directive). Members consider therefore, that cooperatives serve as a **springboard for social innovation** and they point to the **greater resilience of cooperatives**, which is in large part due to the cooperative model of governance, and to their characteristic method of capital accumulation, which is less dependent on the development of financial markets and is linked both to the allocation of surpluses to reserve funds, and to the implementation of the enterprise's objectives.

Regulatory framework: Members feel that a reference to the important role of cooperatives should be made in the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, regretting that the latter merely recalls their contribution to job creation and social innovation. The Commission is asked to:

- **create a unit** responsible for cooperatives and other social-economy organisations aiming at paying greater attention to measures geared to ensure an adequate level of resources and to addressing policy development on social-economy organisations;
- focus proper attention to the restructuring of industrial and service enterprises that are in crisis, or without a successor, into cooperatives through the **creation of services** dedicated to this task;

- provide **more flexibility on the public procurement rules** for employee-led enterprises, for example by including a time-limited reservation.

In keeping with ILO Recommendation 193/2002, Member States are asked to adopt a **comprehensive policy to support the cooperative business model** and to identify strategic sectors suitable for cooperative projects.

Business transfers and restructuring: the report considers that the transfer of a business to its employees through the creation of cooperative and other forms of employee ownership should be supported by a **specific EU budget line that also includes financial instruments**. It calls for the **creation of a European mechanism** designed to promote the development of cooperatives and, in particular, business transfers under the cooperative form. Members also call on the Commission to:

- identify financial instruments to encourage worker buy-outs;
- put in place mechanisms to facilitate exchanges of best practices in this field between enterprises and to report to the Council and Parliament on the outcome;
- support financially, and through a targeted, intelligent use of the Structural Funds, **better knowledge and training** amongst trade unions and bodies tasked with providing information on the creation or transfer of businesses;
- consider developing a database that systematically collects cases and information on restructuring into cooperatives, with a view to circulating good practices and collecting consistent data.

Access to funding and business support: in view of the difficulties experienced by cooperatives in gaining access to venture capital, Members call on the Commission, together with the EIB and the European Investment Fund (EIF), to ensure that cooperatives have **access to EU-level financial mechanisms** – including, where appropriate, the **SME financing action plan suggested in the** Single Market Act.

Lastly, the report emphasises that the programmes and funds being established under the **Multi-annual Financial Framework (2014-2020)** should be important instruments for supporting cooperatives. Lastly, it calls on the Commission to support a pilot project to assist in the transfer of enterprises in crisis to workers, so they can continue working.

Contribution of cooperatives to overcoming the crisis

2012/2321(INI) - 02/07/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the contribution of cooperatives to overcoming the crisis.

Members note that cooperatives play an essential role in the European economy by combining profitability with solidarity, and they should benefit from a clearer and more coherent legislative framework. There are in the EU about 160 000 cooperative enterprises owned by 123 million members and providing jobs for 5.4 million people. Cooperatives contribute, on average, around **5 % to the GDP of each Member State**. Parliament recalls that over the past few years, several hundred industrial and service cooperative enterprises have been established as the result of the **restructuring of businesses in crisis or without successors**, thereby re-developing local economic activities and jobs. Members consider therefore, that cooperatives serve as a **springboard for social innovation** and they point to the **greater resilience of cooperatives**, which is in large part due to the cooperative model of governance, and to their characteristic method of capital accumulation.

Members call on the Commission to **conduct a review of existing legislation** in order to find common ground and to harmonise the key elements with a view to lifting the barriers to the development of cooperatives, noting that there are a diversity of situations In Member States, reflecting legal and conceptual differences.

Regulatory framework: Members feel that a reference to the important role of cooperatives should be made in the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, regretting that the latter merely recalls their contribution to job creation and the greater funding difficulties they face as compared to SMEs.

The Commission is asked to:

- **create a unit** responsible for cooperatives and other social-economy organisations aiming at paying greater attention to measures geared to ensure an adequate level of resources and to addressing policy development on social-economy organisations;
- focus proper attention to the restructuring of industrial and service enterprises that are in crisis, or without a successor, into cooperatives through the **creation of services** dedicated to this task;
- provide **more flexibility on the public procurement rules** for employee-led enterprises, for example by including a time-limited reservation;
- ensure that measures under the Social Business Initiative are coordinated and that administrative barriers between the two initiatives are reduced.

In keeping with ILO Recommendation 193/2002, Member States are asked to adopt a **comprehensive policy to support the cooperative business model** and to identify strategic sectors suitable for cooperative projects.

Business transfers and restructuring: Parliament notes that the use of worker buy-outs is becoming an increasingly common practice in the Member States in response to the economic crisis and considers that the transfer of a business to its employees through the creation of cooperative and other forms of employee ownership should be supported by a **specific EU budget line that also includes financial instruments**. It calls for the **creation of a European mechanism** designed to promote the development of cooperatives and, in particular, business transfers under the cooperative form. Members also call on the Commission to:

- identify financial instruments to encourage worker buy-outs;

- put in place mechanisms to facilitate exchanges of best practices in this field between enterprises and to report to the Council and Parliament on the outcome;

- support financially, and through a targeted, intelligent use of the Structural Funds, better knowledge and training amongst trade unions and bodies tasked with providing information on the creation or transfer of businesses;

- consider developing a database that systematically collects cases and information on restructuring into cooperatives, with a view to circulating good practices and collecting consistent data.

Access to funding and business support: in view of the difficulties experienced by cooperatives in gaining access to venture capital, Members call on the Commission, together with the EIB and the European Investment Fund (EIF), to ensure that cooperatives have **access to EU-level financial mechanisms** – including, where appropriate, the **SME financing action plan suggested in the Single Market Act**. Furthermore, Parliament emphasises that the programmes and funds being established under the **Multi-annual Financial Framework (2014-2020)** should be important instruments for supporting cooperatives. It calls on the Commission to support a pilot project to assist in the transfer of enterprises in crisis to workers, so they can continue working. Lastly, Parliament takes the view that, in EU and national financial programming, particular attention should be paid to (or a certain percentage set aside for) cooperatives that aim to facilitate access to employment for disadvantaged people, as defined in Regulation (EC) No 2204 /2002.