

A cooperative year
in review



Annual report

June 2022 - May 2023



President

Susanne Westhausen

Director

Agnes Mathis

A year of opportunities

The European cooperative movement has faced a series of complex economic and political challenges in recent times. Our region is grappling with an ongoing war, which has far-reaching political, human, and economic implications. At the same time, the climate crisis is affecting citizens more directly, urging the need for decisive action.

Despite these challenges, the crises have fuelled a growing interest and support for the cooperative movement. Our foundational principles, such as community focus, democratic participation, and our people-centred approach, are resonating more broadly. This shift has expanded interest beyond traditional cooperative circles and the social economy, even though a fully level playing field is yet to be achieved. Our vocabulary is trickling down into policy and discourse.

The collective efforts of our members, board, and staff have significantly contributed to this positive trajectory. Over the past year, milestones such as the adoption of the transition pathway for the social economy have reinforced our actions and fostered collaboration among members. The programmes we have finalized or are currently engaged in have bolstered networks and championed cooperative enterprise values among diverse stakeholders. We are now shifting gears from ideas and vision to concrete political commitment and actions.

However, we must remain vigilant and continue preparing for future challenges. The Board has been deeply involved in the development of a new strategy for Cooperatives Europe. In this framework, the Cardiff event not only facilitated

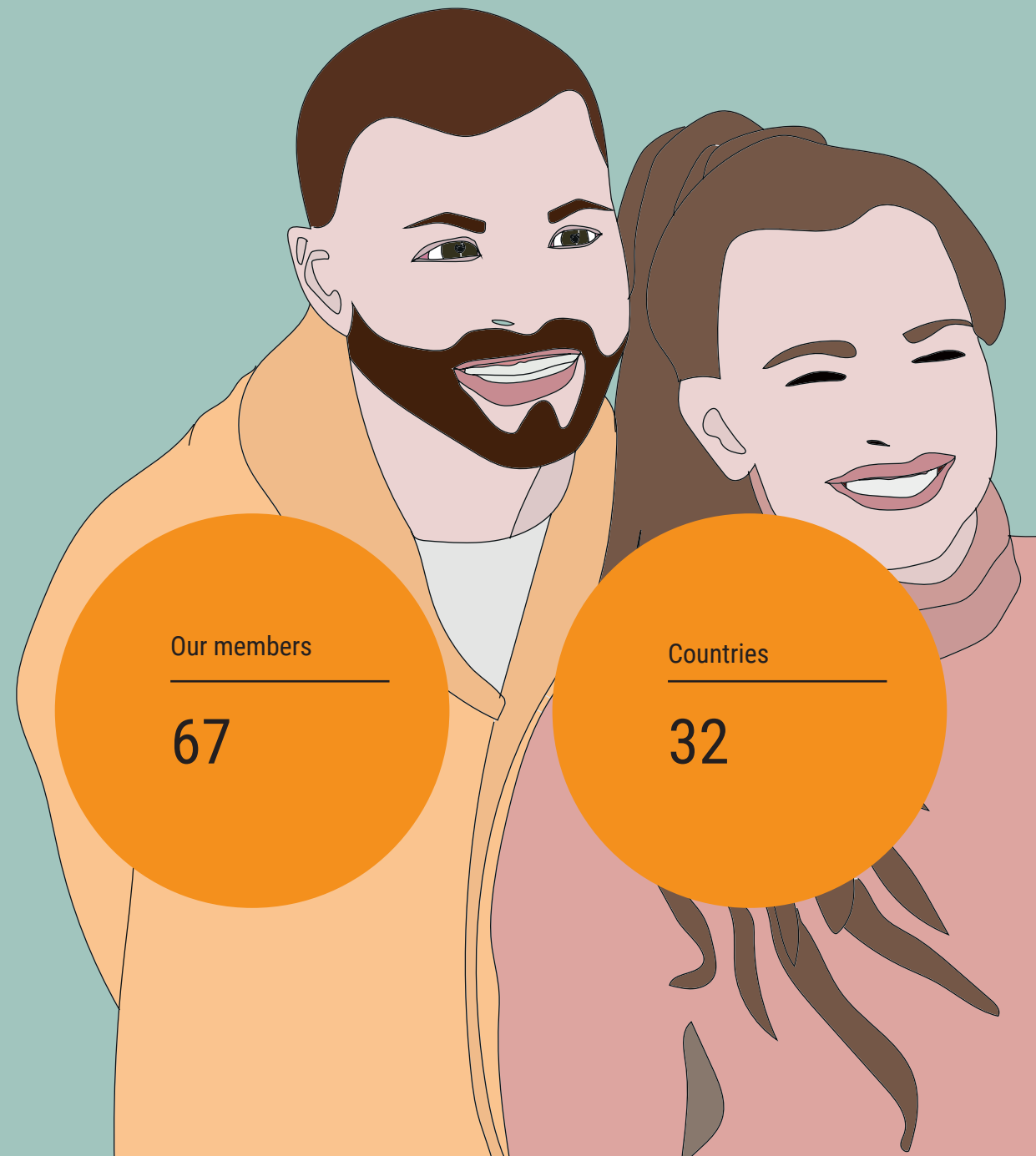
members in exchanging insights but also reinvigorated the Young European Cooperators Network. In alignment with our values, the byelections of the Board have resulted in increased female representation.

Step by step together we are making our vision a reality. Our achievements are not to be taken for granted and much work remains. But with this strong foundation, we can confront new challenges as our values lead the way.

We invite you to delve into the Cooperatives Europe 2023 Annual Report to discover more about the work done this year.

Yours cooperatively,
Susanne
Agnes

The voice of cooperative enterprises in Europe





Cooperative
enterprises

250,000

Employees

5m

Members

141m

1

A stronger place for cooperatives in Europe

Reshaping policy to support cooperatives

This year has been characterized by a political landscape heavily influenced by geopolitical tensions, most notably the war in Ukraine and its socioeconomic ripple effects on both individuals and the wider economy. As such, it came as no surprise when the European Commission's primary focus shifted to addressing Europe's economic recovery and launching an ambitious programme encompassing social affairs, strategic energy autonomy, and digital innovation.

In light of these developments, 2023 has proven to be a year of not just "repairing" or "recovering," but rather of striving for improvement and forward-thinking. Cooperatives Europe has seized this opportunity to bolster the European

cooperative movement, emphasizing its competitiveness, resilience, and solidarity in the face of adversity.

In particular, Cooperatives Europe has worked to support cooperatives as they grapple with surging energy prices, supply chain disruptions, and limited access to financing. By championing these organizations, Cooperatives Europe has played an instrumental role in demonstrating how cooperatives can adapt to and overcome these challenges while remaining true to their core principles.

Supporting and promoting cooperative solidarity.

The outbreak of the war and the earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye affected cooperatives of all sorts across Ukraine and Türkiye.

With infrastructure ravaged many of the victims no longer have housing, drinkable water, and other basic amenities. In response, we saw our members demonstrate incredible acts of solidarity and tireless efforts by associations on the ground to support the victims.

In this context, Cooperatives Europe facilitated communication for support and assistance to disaster-affected areas. We saw various initiatives on the ground by COOP Ukraine, Genç İşçi Kooperatif, ORKOOP and many other members and partners. We witnessed a wave of true cooperative solidarity and we are incredibly proud of the continuous efforts to support people in need.



Our system has always worked as a single family, and during the war, cooperative principles helped us not to be lost in the face of fear, to be resistant to challenges and threats. We did not give up, kept in touch, looked for ways out of various situations, helped each other and believed in victory.

Illia Gorokhivskyi



2

Social Economy

With the publication of the Social Economy Action Plan in December 2021, 2022 was the year of its implementation. Many actions announced in the plan came to life in the last couple of months and Cooperatives Europe made sure to be part of the process and to push our European partners to leverage cooperatives' potential to its fullest.





- **Civil Society Days 2023**

On the 1st of March, Cooperatives Europe co-organized a workshop on “Skills and lifelong learning for democratic societies” with the Lifelong Learning Platform (LLLP), the European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) at the occasion of the 2023 edition of the Civil Society Days. This event was the occasion to present how the cooperative model and practising democracy at work contribute to a democratic society.

- **Conference on the social economy and the future of Europe**

At the occasion of the Conference on the Social Economy and the Future of Europe organized by the French Presidency of the Council of the EU in Strasbourg, Cooperatives Europe co-hosted a workshop with ConcertES, UNIPSO, and the Social Good Accelerator on “How to mobilize the digital for a social and economic added value: an exchange of good practices”. This participatory workshop was the opportunity to discuss the need to develop information sharing and digital commons for a more ethical and social digital economy. It also raised the importance of promoting digital democratization through education and training.

- **ICA CCR Research Conference 2022**

Cooperatives Europe recognizes the vital role that research networks play in promoting our vision. At the ICA Europe Research Conference on “Rethinking cooperatives: From local to global and from the past to the future” we showed how cooperatives can maintain their local roots while expanding cross-border activities, provided they have robust governance structures and a supportive cooperative ecosystem in place. By engaging with research networks, we aim to foster growth, innovation, and global connections, empowering cooperatives to adapt and thrive in an ever-evolving world.

Key events

2.1. Institutional outreach

In October, our President Susanne Westhausen and our director Agnès Mathis had the opportunity to meet with Nicolas Schmit, the EU commissioner in charge of jobs and social rights. This meeting was the occasion to exchange our members' actions in favour of sustainable development and resilience, especially when facing Covid or the war in Ukraine. Discussions on important milestones lying ahead of us were also at the heart of this meeting, such as the implementation of the Social Economy Action Plan, issues on the legal framework, the European Pillar of Social Rights, youth, skills and entrepreneurship. This meeting was another step towards a regular and open dialogue with the Commission and we will ensure to remain an active partner of the Commission for the years to come.

2.2 Our representation through different bodies and platforms

Cooperatives Europe maintained its presence in the institutions this year by being an active

member of several channels and bodies in which we can share our positions and connect with decision-makers. We are particularly present in the following spheres:

- The Expert group on social economy and social enterprises (GECES) has enabled us to highlight the circumstances and initiatives of our members in Ukraine. Apart from major topics like the transition pathways, in GECES this year, we have also addressed issues such as connecting social economy research with policymakers and developing legal frameworks for the social economy and cooperatives.

- The Civil Society Liaison Group at the EESC. In this group, Cooperatives Europe discussed the EU agenda and promoted civil and political dialogue, cooperation and participatory democracy. Our participation has ranged from the organization of the Civil Society Days 2023 to sharing our latest developments and projects, and those of our members.

- Within the European Parliament's Social Economy Intergroup (SEIG) we discussed legislative files impacting our members and reached out to MEPs aware and supportive of our actions. This year, we participated as speakers at their public hearing on

the upcoming Council Recommendation on framework conditions for the Social Economy and attended their plenary session to discuss with MEPs the next steps of the implementation of the Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP).





The **European Union's Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP)** is highly relevant to the work of Cooperatives Europe, as it seeks to strengthen and promote the social economy sector, encompassing cooperatives, social enterprises, and mutuals. The plan focuses on improving access to funding, streamlining legal frameworks, and promoting the recognition of social economy organizations, all of which directly impact cooperatives.

Cooperatives Europe plays a crucial role in supporting and advocating for the cooperative movement within the broader social economy landscape. By actively engaging with the SEAP, Cooperatives Europe ensures that the specific needs and concerns of cooperatives are considered and addressed in the plan's implementation. This involvement contributes to creating a favourable environment for cooperatives to grow, create sustainable jobs, and drive positive social change in line with the European Green Deal and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Ultimately, the SEAP serves as a vital tool for Cooperatives Europe to advance a thriving cooperative sector across the continent.



2.3. A strong role for cooperatives in the Social Economy Action Plan

Building adequate social economy framework conditions

Cooperatives Europe advocated for an adequate policy and legal framework for cooperatives, ahead of the Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions. We submitted a response to the Commission's call for evidence on the matter and focused on particular action areas, including reducing administrative burdens for cooperatives, adapting the taxation framework to their specificities, facilitating their access to finance and improving their legal recognition.

EU Social Economy Gateway

In 2023, the Commission began working on the upcoming EU Social Economy Gateway, one of the deliverables of the Social Economy Action Plan. The gateway will be a single-entry point for social economy stakeholders, decision-makers and individuals seeking information on relevant EU funding, policies and initiatives. We actively collaborate with

the Commission to co-build this platform and contribute to the content of this website to ensure the inclusion of all needed information on cooperatives across all sectors, national contexts, and definitions.

Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy

Because of the intersectional nature of youth entrepreneurship, this topic laid at the heart of our work this year. Cooperatives Europe integrated the Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy (YEPA), another output expected from the SEAP. The YEPA is a policy learning network composed of national policymakers, national or international youth entrepreneurship networks and thematic experts. Over the next 3 years, Cooperatives Europe will be part of this network and will participate in the organization of 6 thematic workshops in different Member States and policy recommendations related to youth entrepreneurship.

Transition pathways

At the intersection of the Social Economy Action Plan and the Twin Transition lies a particular file on which we have worked in the last twelve months: the Transition Pathway for the proximity and social economy industrial

ecosystem. This blueprint identifies key actions to accelerate and achieve both the green and the digital transition within the social economy ecosystem.

As part of the co-creation-creation process, Cooperatives Europe made sure to put the concerns and interests of cooperatives at the centre of its contributions. After four rounds of consultations before its publications (through the GECES, stakeholder workshops and call for feedback), **we submitted a pledge for its co-implementation** in February 2023 in which we committed to work on the skills gap as the main obstacles for our members to successfully green or digitalize their operations.



Our EU **Transition Pathways pledge** focused on addressing the gap in green and digital skills in the social economy and boosting green business communities and citizens' initiatives. Through our project SE4Ces and the creation of a multi-stakeholder alliance, we committed to the following:

On addressing capacity and skills gap and boosting digital skills:

1. Assess and map social economy skills provision in Europe.
2. Adapt existing educational materials to address shortcomings.
3. Create a new international master's programme on social economy and community development strategies by 2030.
4. Provide free online access to these new innovative educational materials.

On green business communities and citizens' initiative:

5. Sharing of best practices until 2024 and beyond.
 6. Foster collaboration & synergies between higher education, civil society, social economy organisations and mainstream businesses.
 7. Create local partnerships for more sustainable local value chains after 2024.
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3

Entrepreneurship

This year has seen a particular interest in entrepreneurship policies, both at the EU and Member State level and within civil society. At the intersection of skill and education policies on one side and labour and competitiveness on the other, entrepreneurship has been discussed in many bodies in the institutions, from the SME Envoy network to the SME intergroup or meetings of the Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy. Cooperatives Europe seized this opportunity to step into these spaces and show cooperatives resilience and strength as a solution to these times of uncertainty and instability. We also participated in various events such as the Stockholm Entrepreneurs Day 'Accelerating Social Impact', SME Assembly and various other events.



- **SME Assembly 2022:** Cooperatives Europe participated in the SME Assembly held in Prague, focusing on “European Enterprises of Tomorrow: Sustainable, Resilient, Digital.” This is an important event in the field of entrepreneurship policy and provides an opportunity for us to liaise with key actors.
- **Youth Entrepreneurship Policy Academy (YEPA) kick-off meeting**, organized by the OECD and the Commission in Brussels on 9-10 March in Brussels. Our attendance marked the beginning of our collaboration in the network for the next three years.
- **Workshop on “Medium-sized companies, an overlooked group in European business”** organized by the Austrian Institute of Technology (AIT). This workshop was the occasion for us to raise awareness about the administrative and regulatory burdens that our member mid-cap cooperatives face. We particularly mentioned the low level of innovation uptake and investments, and the current skill mismatch on the market, especially when it comes to managerial skills for worker governance in cooperatives.
- Cooperatives Europe participated in the **Stockholm Entrepreneurs Day ‘Accelerating Social Impact’**, organized by Coompanion. During the event, we engaged primarily with early-stage entrepreneurs and ecosystem builders from the Nordic region, exchanging ideas and perspectives on cooperative entrepreneurship, particularly highlighting cooperatives as frontrunners in innovation.

Key events

3.1 SME Envoy

During this year's SME Envoy meetings, Cooperatives Europe addressed various topics, emphasizing the growing interest in energy cooperatives and their resilience, attractiveness, and strength in times of crisis, such as the war in Ukraine and soaring energy prices. Key discussions included finance scale-up, sustainable consumption, energy crisis impacts, the late payment directive, and other vital dossiers.

These meetings also serve as a platform for collaboration with other business organizations, reinforcing the position of cooperatives within the SME landscape. Cooperatives Europe actively works alongside its European sectoral members to champion their perspectives when relevant topics arise, such as those involving the industrial/ services or retail sector.

3.2 SME Intergroup

Cooperatives Europe's participation in the SME Intergroup complements our engagement with the Social Economy Intergroup. This involvement allows us to connect with MEPs who support SMEs but may not yet be familiar with or committed to the social economy and cooperatives. Through discussions on various topics, such as the SME test or women's entrepreneurship, we informally share our cooperative perspective and occasionally broaden their understanding of cooperatives. Additionally, this engagement fosters valuable contacts when working on regulatory frameworks for our members, further strengthening our advocacy efforts.



The **SME Envoy** is a high-level expert network with representatives from EU Member States (SME ambassadors), business organizations, and the European Commission to which Cooperatives Europe participates. The SME Envoy acts as a policy advisory group on all topics that could impact SMEs. This allows Cooperatives Europe both to advocate for a cooperative SME policy and to establish contact and coordination with other business organizations and representatives from Member states.

The **SME intergroup** is a forum for informal exchanges at the European Parliament of views on SMEs across different political groups and for the contact between MEPs and civil society, including Cooperatives Europe.



4

Level playing field for coops

4.1. Fit for Future platform

As part of the Fit for Future Platform, Cooperatives Europe collaborates with Member States and other European organizations to provide expertise on the simplification of EU laws to reduce burdens. We have presented our insights on topics such as business-friendly VAT systems, interconnectivity between digital and green transitions, SMEs' access to capital, and food donation. Cooperatives Europe notably served as the rapporteur on the latter topic, working closely with its retail sector member Euro Coop.

The platform is currently developing its 2023 programme, and we are particularly involved in discussions on GDPR, the social economy, and the SME test. By actively participating in the Fit for Future Platform, Cooperatives Europe ensures that

the cooperative perspective is effectively represented in shaping future policies and initiatives.

4.2. Corporate sustainability and taxation regulations

In our efforts to promote an adequate legal framework and level-playing field for cooperatives to thrive, we paid particular attention to the Corporate Sustainable Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). Considering its vast scope and potential negative impacts on SME cooperatives, we advocated for the need to reach a compromise that is both impactful and workable for cooperatives businesses while fostering a level playing field for cooperatives across Europe. We shared our position in public consultations and raised our concerns in several conferences or meetings.

Cooperatives Europe also paid particular attention to the proposal for a **Directive on Business in Europe: Framework for Income Taxation (BEFIT)**. We participated in the Commission's public consultation and highlighted the need to adapt taxation rules to the cooperatives' economic reality including high compliance costs due to their auditing system, lack of recognition of cooperatives' specific operating principles and management logic, as well as the need to protect small and medium cooperatives from legislation ill-adapted to their size and sectors.



Chaired by the vice-president of the Commission Maros Sefcovic, the **Fit for Future platform** works on simplification , burden reduction and new challenges with regard to EU legislation.



5

Empowering youth cooperativism

The Cardiff Conference presented a valuable opportunity to engage young cooperators and reinvigorate the Young European Cooperator Network (YECN). Approximately 50 youth delegates convened at the event, participating in a 'coopathon' and sharing their vision for YECN's future work across three primary areas: communication, projects, and institutional matters.

Since then, the network has held regular meetings, using the input gathered in Cardiff to develop a comprehensive work plan for 2023-2024. Cooperatives Europe is committed to supporting the voices of young cooperators across Europe and fostering synergies with both the international level (ICA Youth Committee) and national movements.



6

Education

Building on our existing initiatives and strategic reflections guided by the Board, Cooperatives Europe has placed a special emphasis on education and research. Board and staff members held several meetings to evaluate initial findings, set objectives, and outline potential actions. The preliminary guidelines were presented to members during a dedicated session in November, enabling the identification of shared challenges and various examples of addressing them.

Key objectives include raising awareness of the cooperative difference, securing support from public authorities for education and research, expanding existing programmes, and connecting various stakeholders. These guidelines will be further developed and translated into actionable steps to strengthen cooperatives through education and research initiatives.

6.1. Promoting youth entrepreneurship in education

SE4Ces Erasmus+ partnership

[SE4Ces project](#) Erasmus+ partnership in which Cooperatives Europe has communication lead will end in December 2023. All partners have been quite busy in the past months delivering all the outputs of the project and contributing to the development of the planned International Masters on Social Economy. Cooperatives Europe participated in Bologna University's 4-day mobility in Italy last January where all learning materials previously co-created were presented and discussed.

After participating in the Conference 'Social Economy, the future of Europe' in Strasbourg in May 2022 with a co-creation workshop, SE4Ces was also featured at 'Promoting Commons',

an event organized by COVER at the University of Essex. Cooperatives Europe was present at both initiatives.



7

Gender equality

Gender equality, a core principle of cooperatives, is vital to ensuring women's active participation in the economy and promoting sustainable development. Cooperatives Europe recognizes the importance of empowering women and fostering equal opportunities for all members in decision-making processes, and resource allocation. By actively promoting gender equality, Cooperatives Europe aims to create a more inclusive, diverse, and effective cooperative movement, ultimately contributing to a fairer, more resilient, and sustainable economy.

Cooperatives Europe has made gender equality a strategic focus, reflecting on its charters and past actions. In the context of EU policy, member actions, and the socio-economic landscape, the board has engaged in discussions with members to evaluate and establish action plans in areas such as education, governance, and

entrepreneurship. At the same time, our secretariat has engaged in various activities to promote and discuss the issue of gender equity across platforms such as at the SME assembly and the SME intergroup.

We are pleased to report that there has also been a significant increase in women's representation on our board, highlighting Cooperatives Europe's ongoing commitment to gender equality. This progress not only ensures diverse perspectives in our decision-making process but also serves as a model for cooperatives across Europe. By actively working to create a more inclusive and balanced leadership, we are demonstrating our dedication to fostering equal opportunities, empowering women in the cooperative movement, and promoting a fairer, more equitable future.



Cooperatives can be a powerful force for women's economic and social empowerment. By working together and supporting one another, women in cooperatives can achieve great things. However, they cannot succeed through equal opportunities alone. It requires intentional action that recognizes and addresses the unique needs and experiences of every woman.

Katia De Luca | Board member



8

Collaboration with sectors

Shape-EU

The European Affordable Housing Consortium, coordinated by Housing Europe, aims to support SMEs, public authorities, and (social) housing providers in implementing renovation projects targeting social and affordable housing. Cooperatives Europe, as a member of the advisory board, contributed by presenting at the Renovation Summit organized by Housing Europe.

This collaboration presents an opportunity for Cooperatives Europe to expand its network beyond the cooperative sphere, addressing a critical issue such as ensuring accessible housing for all citizens. By participating in initiatives like the European Affordable Housing Consortium, Cooperatives Europe demonstrates its commitment to fostering a more inclusive and sustainable society.

CO-FRESH Horizon partnership

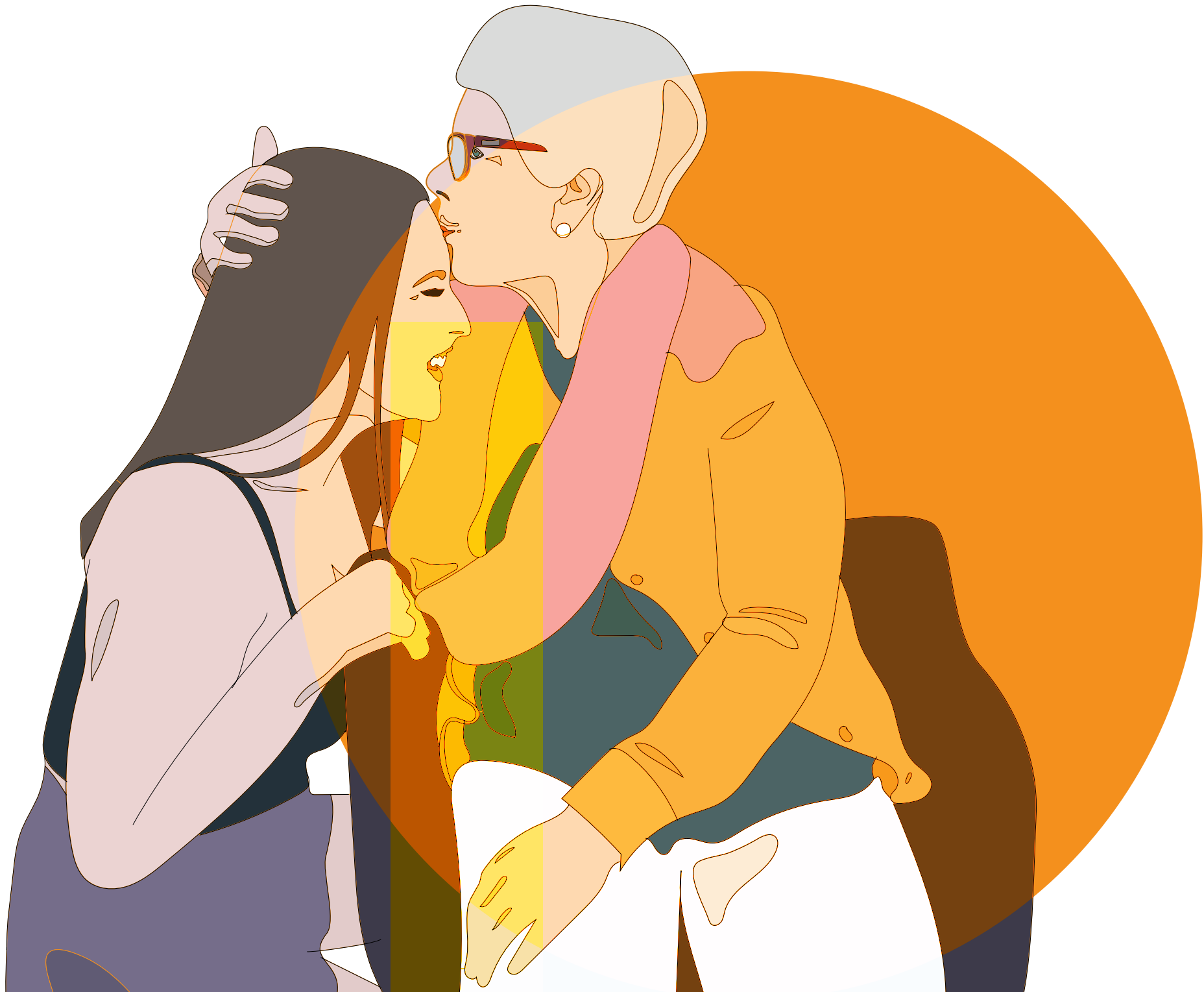
The Horizon2020 project CO-creating sustainable and competitive FRuits and vEgetableS' value cHains in Europe ([CO-FRESH](#)) has entered its last year.

All pilot activities are in full swing and a grand total of 19 co-created innovations are being developed.

After the project GA in October 2022 in Budapest, we decided to organize a [dissemination event](#) in Brussels gathering over 100 participants, also involving the other umbrella organizations engaged in the project (Eurocoop, Confagricoltura, Eucofel): "Cultivating Sustainability: Advancing Efficient Agri-Food Value Chains". Four innovations were presented during the event representing a vastly multidisciplinary approach, ranging from quality vegetable

protein from fava beans, to digital governance tools, to food waste prevention, to the Internet of Things for water management.

The logo for CO-FRESH is displayed on a light yellow rectangular background. The word "CO" is in a dark blue, sans-serif font. To its right are three small, solid-colored geometric shapes: a green circle, a brown triangle, and a yellow hexagon. Below these elements, the word "FRESH" is written in a larger, dark blue, sans-serif font.





9

International cooperative development

Future actions in development are underway, bridging the gap

The conclusion of our initial Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) between the ICA-Cooperatives Europe and the European Commission has not put an end to the collaborative work of Cooperatives Europe's development platform (CEDP). Members of the platform are poised to contribute to future collaborations in the framework of a potential upcoming follow-up FPA. Under the board's supervision, and following the publication of the call, we are actively working with other ICA regions to seize this significant opportunity for the cooperative movement. While considering Europe's unique position, we are currently outlining actions to support European organizations in this programme.

Our international development efforts also included participation in the closing conferences of two EU-Turkish projects, ToBeCoop and NewGenCoop, in Rize and Ankara on June 23-24, 2022. Implemented within the EU Civil Society Dialogue Programme and in partnership with the Italian organization Haliéus, these projects aimed to strengthen Türkiye's cooperative business structures and networking capacities, enhancing democratic participation in decision-making processes. Cooperatives Europe shared its EU-level work and emphasized the importance of cooperatives collaborating and structuring their movement in networks for effective representation and advocacy.

Cooperatives Europe also participated in the Global Innovation Cooperative Summit in Paris, an international forum for discussing how cooperatives contribute to a plural and sustainable economy. Our intervention focused on cooperatives and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), using this opportunity to strengthen ties with global cooperative leaders.

10

Visibility for cooperatives in Europe

Cooperatives Europe has continued investing in its communication channels to strengthen the dialogue with members and to increase the effectiveness of our advocacy work. Over the past few years, we have worked hard to keep our communication tools up to date with current standards. That work has continued this year.

10.1 Development of a recognisable brand

Building on our website infrastructure

The website is the core pillar of our communication work and one of our most important digital channels. It is conceived not only to make our communications more effective towards external audiences but also to enhance the interactions with our members. One of our main tasks this year

was to build and improve our website in various dimensions. In total, we resolved more than 40 existing issues ranging from user experience to visual style to more technical processes that happen behind the scenes. For example, this year fixed issues with regard to GDPR and data, animations, filtering of data, and missing functionalities. The aim for the coming year is to use this infrastructure to provide more content and to make it more dynamic and engaging.

Other outreach activities

Besides the website, newsletter and social media channels our team, including our board and president, engage in numerous external activities.

These outreach activities ensure cooperatives remain top-of-mind with policymakers, civil society actors and other stakeholders in the field.

We also promoted members' and partners'

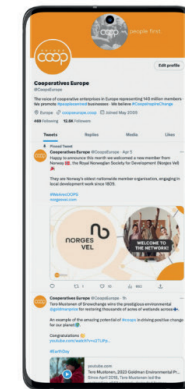
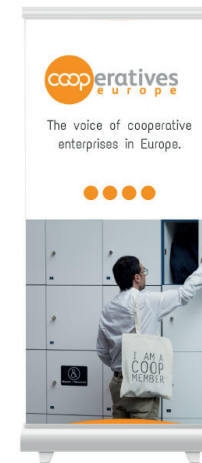
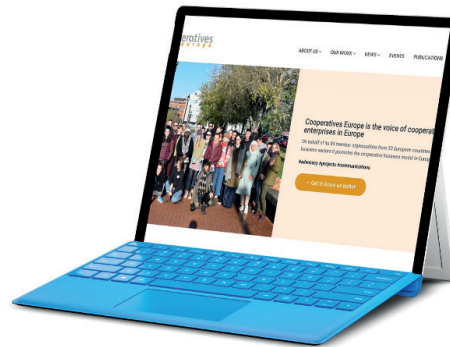
work to increase our own impact and visibility online and in person. For example, we participated in these activities:

- A workshop hosted by us on “communicating #peoplefirst”
- Contribution to the EESC CSO Group [Diversity Europe Newsletter - March 2023 \(europa.eu\)](#)
- We follow our members and partners on social media promoting their work at international events such as the [OECD Social Economy Summit](#)
- We contributed to [the cooperative news annual Q&A](#)

Of course, we collaborate closely with the ICA and disseminate some of their communication materials and activities.

Brand alignment

This year has been a year where we have slowly built a clearer multichannel brand identity for Cooperatives Europe. To make Cooperatives Europe more recognisable we opt for more consistency in colour choices, shapes and image choice across digital and print communication. This ongoing process follows the revamp of our website that was completed last year and should conclude in a brand book that depicts more specific guidelines for our visual strategy.



10.2 Improved interactions with members

Cooperatives Europe has implemented its ambitions to not only improve visibility but also its interactions with members. This year we have received delegations and visited members for regular discussions, and updates, and to hear their feedback and ideas for collaboration. These face-to-face interactions have allowed us to build stronger relationships and better understand needs, priorities and opportunities.

In this framework, the Cardiff conference also played a significant role in revitalizing our ties, not just between the members but also in the Young European Cooperators Network.

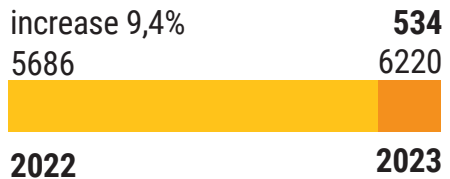
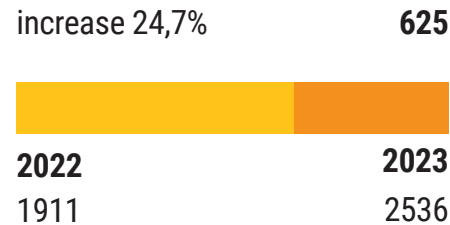
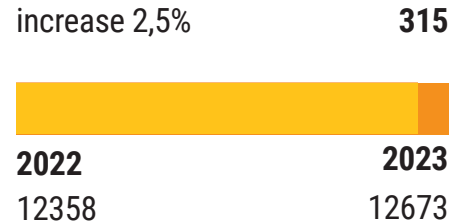


10.3 Achieving significant results through digital channels

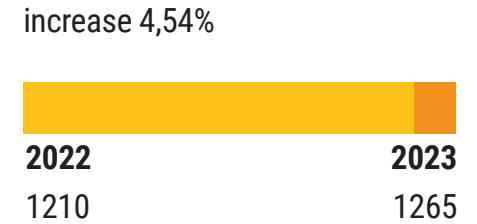
This year we have made some significant results in the realm of digital communications. One specific achievement is the Cardiff conference campaign for which we reached a staggering 600 000 people on all of our online channels combined.

Another significant achievement is the increase in the opening rate of our newsletter following the changes made last year. Increased accessibility of the newsletter combined with more visibility for our members, resulted in a 4,1% percentage points increase in opening rate. We also gained 55 extra subscribers (4,54% increase) which is the highest in many years after stagnating numbers in previous years.

Followers



Subscribers



MailChimp's average newsletter opening rate 24%

Cooperatives Europe's newsletter last year 28,5% (average opening rate)
Cooperatives Europe newsletter this year 32,6% (average opening rate)

increase 4,1%

11

Governance

This year was the first since the pandemic when we were able to operate without health restrictions. As a people-centred organization, we were happy to meet in person again to engage more directly with our members and stakeholders. Face-to-face interactions have facilitated our work and have enabled us to develop our positions and strategies vis-a-vis international actors with greater ease.

11.1 General Assembly and Board

Regrettably, our first General Assembly with the new governance structure had to take place online in June. Despite this, we successfully discussed and approved yearly reports, outlined perspectives for the current year while considering the war in Ukraine, and improved gender balance within our

governance by appointing three women in by-law elections. Our board also expanded its regional representation, welcoming two new members from European organizations outside of the European Union.

The board has been instrumental in implementing the annual work programme, preparing its position within the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), and ensuring the financial sustainability of Cooperatives Europe. Additionally, the board has been developing a new inclusive strategy for our organization. After defining its purpose, board members have worked on objectives and actions in three key areas. The outcomes of this strategic reflection were presented and discussed during a dedicated session at the conference on “Young People and the Future of Cooperation in Europe” held in Cardiff, Wales in November 2022. This has set the direction for our movement in the coming years.

11.2 European Union Coordination Committee (EUCC)

Comprising national inter-sectoral organizations and European sectoral members of Cooperatives Europe, the EUCC serves as the collective voice on EU issues. It addresses matters related to the social economy, such as transition pathways and regulatory frameworks like the due diligence directive. Furthermore, it provides a platform for sharing information about members’ activities and fostering collaboration and coordination.

11.3 Contributing to international activities

Being part of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) allowed us to both reinforce its activities and ensure our voice is heard through the various initiatives and bodies of the international organization. Cooperatives Europe has actively participated in several ICA activities, including:

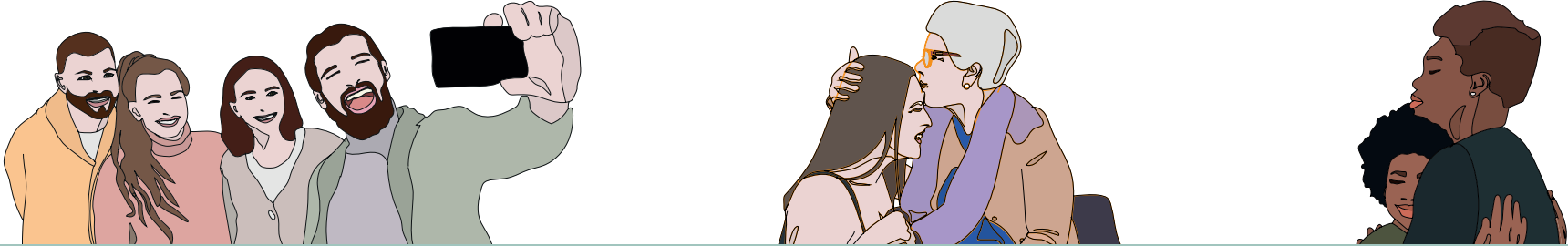
- the ICA Board and its elective General Assembly in Seville,
- the Membership Working Group,
- the Communications Working Group,
- Regional and International Sectoral Directors' Meetings,
- Youth Committee,
- and Gender Committee.

Involving both staff and members in these efforts remains crucial to strengthening cooperative membership within the global movement.



Account

Incomes



Membership

77%

Project incomes

11%

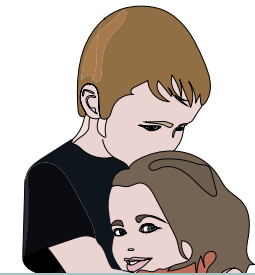
Donation

5%

Others

7%

Expenses



Personnel

66%

Project expenses

4%

Travel premises

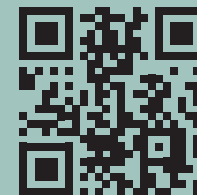
12%

External services – IT

12%

Meetings & other

6%



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