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# The COVID-19 outbreak update from Legacoop, Italy

This update provides insights on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Italian cooperative enterprises, and measures being taken by them to support workers, members/customers, and people in their communities affected by the crisis.

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*"We are women and men cooperators who are present right alongside the doctors and nurses, keeping hospitals clean, operating in supermarkets, offices, warehouses, kitchens and thermal power plants. We are the ones working in social cooperatives to keep assistance alive for populations that were already vulnerable before the pandemic and are even more so after."* - Mauro Lusetti, President Legacoop



The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted life dramatically in Italy. On 25 March there were 74,386 confirmed cases with 7,503 deaths and 9,362 recoveries. The stringent measures adopted by the Italian Government, needed to slow down and contain the virus, have had seriously detrimental consequences for enterprises in the country.

Regarding cooperative enterprises, if the emergency situation and the measures around the coronavirus pandemic continue for a longer period, it is expected that workers at risk could reach at least 265,000. This estimate is based on the number of workers and worker members in cooperative in a number of key sectors, including:

- Social cooperatives pointed out that 200,000 workers could be at risk only in their sector, as they are precluded from carrying out activities of general interest, such as taking care of elderly and disabled people due to the closure of day centres, or interruption of home care, as well as

interruptions of educational services.

- 26,000 workers working in cooperatives that provide catering and cleaning contract services are at risk of losing their jobs.
- Over 21,000 workers and members working in cooperatives engaged in tourism, entertainment and management of artistic and cultural heritage, and in sport are also facing great losses to their livelihoods.
- Logistics and transport cooperatives, where over 18,000 workers operate, are also among the sectors hit severely by the shut-downs.

To cope with these difficulties, the [Alliance of Italian Cooperatives](#) >, made an appeal to the government regarding support measures for households, businesses and workers in the economy, a coordinated move with employers' and workers' organizations. An initial decree approved by the Council of Ministers of March 16 allocated €25 billion, of which €10 billion would go toward interventions supporting the economy, in particular guaranteeing higher liquidity to enterprises and toward protecting workers with an extension of social safety nets to enterprises in all sectors of different types and sizes.

Italian cooperatives have assured their members/users and workers of their commitment to continue their activities and to contribute toward alleviating the problems raised by the emergency that affects the daily lives of millions of people. In Lombardy, the region most dramatically affected by the spread of the virus, solidarity and cooperation are more urgently needed. In Lombardy:

- Taxi cooperatives offer free transportation services for people over 65 and in difficult situations.
- **Coop Lombardia** is offering citizens over 65 free delivery of groceries at home, in collaboration with Supermercato24, for purchases made in the Coop circuit. In parallel, the cooperative supports, in solidarity with the Lodi area, a permanent food collection at the Coop Supermarket Lodi.
- With the closure of schools and the commencement of distance learning, the social cooperative **Imiberg**, which manages a school in Bergamo, inaugurated distance lessons on for twenty high school classes, fulfilling the regular school program and promoting active participation of students.
- The Dar = Casa cooperative, adheres to the initiative I take care of my **neighbours** to activate a solidarity network in districts of the Milan metropolitan area, so as not to leave anyone behind, especially the elderly who live alone.

At the national level, similar cooperative initiatives are under way.

- **Agro-food cooperatives** are continuing to produce fruits and vegetables and processing milk products in dairies. They have set in place body temperature controls at the entrance of warehouses and factories and instituted measures to keep adequate distance between workers.
- The **Unipol Group**, a cooperative insurance provider ensures customer protection through insurance solutions and 24-hour assistance services, including immediate medical advice. Moreover UNIPOL donated €20 million to support the national health care system.
- Large cooperative retailers, **Coop and Conad**, are working to ensure continuity and regularity of

supplies at sales points throughout the country. They provide home delivery services, while trying to cope with the surge in demand. Conad donated €3 million to support hospitals in Milan, Rome and Naples. Coop has also made home delivery services for those over 65 years of age free of charge across a number of highly affected regions. COOP also signed an agreement with Civil Protection and with Association of Italian Municipalities to make home delivery in all municipalities through local volunteer organizations.

- **Community cooperatives** in smaller villages, such as "Biccari" community cooperative, in the province of Foggia, and the "I live in Vaccarizzo" community cooperative of Montalto Uffugo in the province of Cosenza are also providing home delivery service for those in need.
- **Cadiai** social cooperative in Bologna is offering family members of the guests in the Centers for the elderly the opportunity to meet their relatives through video meetings on skype instead of face to face visits, which are currently suspended.
- **Cirfood**, a catering cooperative group, has donated unused food for canteens to people in difficulty. The service is to support the elderly and people with special needs who, due to the health emergency, cannot leave their homes.
- **CPL Concordia**, an Energy cooperative group, has made the Concordia Hotel in Modeva available to host doctors and health care operators coming from other regions to fight against COVID-19

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*This article was prepared by Massimo Tognoni, Chief of Legacoop Press and Communication Office. More examples are available from the [Legacoop website](#) under the COVID-19 page and on social media by following #LaCooperazioneNonSiFerma. If you have any further updates from cooperative and other social and solidarity economy (SSE) organizations, kindly share with us at [coop@ilo.org](mailto:coop@ilo.org). This article is part of the ILO website and subject to its [disclaimer](#).*

**Tags:** cooperatives, social economy, enterprises, safety management

**Regions and countries covered:** Europe, Global, Italy

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### News

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### Document

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## News

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