

Europe Region of the International
Co-operative Alliance

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Press Communiqué – for immediate release

Following the EU Competitiveness Council meeting on February 19th, 2013

Entrepreneurship 2020 action plan: more efforts needed to foster the plurality of business forms

EU Commission Vice-president Tajani presented on February 19th the new Entrepreneurship 2020 Action plan to the Competitiveness Council. Through a pro-active entrepreneurship policy, the plan aims to create jobs, growth and a more competitive economy. A follow-up of this debate is planned at the informal ministerial meeting of May 1st-2nd in Dublin.

Cooperatives Europe very much welcomes the cultural change that EU Commission enhances in its action plan, fostering entrepreneurship as an engine for growth and a source of jobs and income. We also supports the actions that are planned both EU and at national levels.

Cooperatives Europe appreciates the fact that the document mentions the plurality of business forms, which should be respected by policy makers. However, this will remains only on paper and is not reflected in the actions described in the document: cooperatives, a way of doing business putting people and not financial capital at the heart of its business, are not even mentioned in the document.

As enterprises, cooperatives have shown that they are key actors for the social and economic development, and this even in times of crisis. Additionally, cooperatives are particularly relevant actors in numbers of actions highlighted by many ministers at the Competitiveness Council meeting, such as education future generations of entrepreneurs or the transfer of business.

This is why Cooperatives Europe profoundly regrets that their role is not recognised in the Entrepreneurship 2020 action plan.

As expressed by Cooperatives Europe during the last meeting of the SME Envoy network in Bologna on February, 8th, three elements are necessary to maintain and promote this diversity: education, finance and business support services.

Commenting on the action plan and the outcomes of the Competitiveness Council meeting, Agnès Mathis, Cooperatives Europe Deputy Director, said: “We hope that these considerations will be taken into account at the next informal ministerial meeting of May. We hope that the implementation of the action plan will be carried out with great efforts of coordination with the principal stakeholders at European level. An action plan having ambitiously aiming to unleash Europe’s entrepreneurial potential, cannot forget that there is much more than one way of doing business. Cooperatives Europe is thus willing to collaborate with the European Commission in future, to make sure that the action plan reach its full effectiveness.”

Notes to the editors

Cooperatives Europe is the European cross-sectoral organization representing cooperative enterprises. On behalf of its 90 member organizations from 34 European countries across all business sectors it promotes the cooperative business model in Europe. Its members represent 123 million individual member cooperators owning 160,000 cooperative enterprises and providing jobs to 5.4 million European citizens.

A cooperative enterprise is a group of people acting together to meet the common needs and aspirations of its members, sharing ownership and making decisions democratically.

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