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Press Communiqué – for immediate release

## Cooperatives Europe participates in Informal Meeting of EU Ministers and State Secretaries for development

On 15th July, Cooperatives Europe was invited to speak at an open dialogue event on the new role of the private sector in development. The event took place within the Informal Meeting of EU Development Ministers organised by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EU Commission under the Italian Presidency of the EU Commission on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> July in Florence, Italy.

The open dialogue aimed at exploring how to encourage the private sector to play a positive role in development and how to minimize the barriers and risks to their engagement.

The event enabled EU Development Ministers to engage with representatives of the private sector, civil society organisations and other stakeholders. Together they discussed ways of strengthening the role of the private sector in development within the framework of the post-2015 goals; it was also discussed how different institutions can contribute to the action plan proposed by the European Commission in its recent communication on “[A stronger role of the private sector in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth in developing countries](#)”.

In his statement, Director of Cooperatives Europe Klaus Niederländer highlighted the large contribution of cooperative enterprises to development as private sector actors and as part of civil society. He recalled that cooperatives have been mentioned in the latest EU Communication on development and cooperation as well as in the related EU Council conclusions\*.

“By providing employment in the form of decent work and social innovation – said Mr. Niederländer - cooperatives play an important role in the achievement of the post-2015 goals. Cooperatives Europe has set up an [online platform](#) showcasing almost 300 ongoing development projects that European cooperative organisations are carrying out all over the world.”

Mr Niederländer concluded: “Cooperatives Europe welcomes EU Commission’s invitation to participate in this event. We are very pleased to see that cooperatives are taken into consideration when talking about the private sector in development and that their contribution is recognised in the latest EU strategic documents on the issue. We are willing to take an active role in the implementation of these guidelines.”

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## Notes to the editors

**Cooperatives Europe** – the European region of the International Cooperative Alliance 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.

**Cooperatives in Development online platform** is an interactive website showcasing the international development projects that European cooperative organisations are carrying out all over the world. The platform currently includes more than 400 projects, out of which almost 300 are ongoing. Visit the platform: <https://coopseurope.coop/development/>

**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.

**\*Cooperatives have recently been mentioned in:**

- the EU Communication on “[A stronger role of the private sector in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth in developing countries](#)”, which states that “cooperatives [...] are often leading the way in providing decent jobs, sustainable livelihoods and inclusive solutions to social problems”.
- the [European Foreign Affairs Council conclusions on the role of the private sector in international development](#), where the Council calls for “increased focus on support to micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, as well as to social enterprises and cooperatives, in both the formal and informal sectors”.

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## Contacts

Carmen Quintana  
Communications Officer  
T: +32 2 743 10 37  
[c.quintana@coopseurope.coop](mailto:c.quintana@coopseurope.coop)