

Cooperatives Europe & Cogeca: EU cooperatives need to be included in the EFSI

EU cooperative projects relating to agri-food, renewable energy and bio-economy sectors must be central to 315 billion euros Juncker Investment Plan, Cooperatives Europe and Cogeca stress in debate at the European Parliament

Cooperatives Europe, together with Cogeca, launched today a debate at the European Parliament on the benefits of the 315 billion euros Juncker Investment plan, stressing that EU cooperatives and especially the agri-food, renewable energy and bio-economy sectors must be central to the plan.

Speaking at the breakfast debate, Cogeca President Christian Pees insisted “We very much welcome the launch of this plan which will help to boost growth and jobs in Europe. We believe that EU cooperatives, along with other forms of enterprises, should be included in the list of projects supported by the European Investment Bank (EIB). In particular, the agri-food, renewable energy and bio-economy sectors, must be amongst the priority areas eligible for investment in the Plan. This is because the agri-food sector is one of the biggest economic sectors in the EU and will have a major multiplier effect that can generate huge benefits across the EU, both upstream and downstream. Yet out of over 2000 applications already waiting, very few relate to agriculture. This must be revised”.

Cooperatives Europe President, Dirk Lehnhoff, underlined that “the structure for governing the EFSI must ensure full transparency and accountability as well as guarantee equal opportunities to all economic sectors and business forms which benefit from the EFSI. Cooperatives are businesses owned and run by their members. Whether the members are employees, customers or local communities, they are everyday people who have an equal say in what their business does and a share in the profits representing between 2-10% of GDP in most EU countries”, he concluded.

Notes to the editors

Cooperatives Europe – the European region of the International Cooperative Alliance, is the European cross-sectoral organisation representing cooperative enterprises. On behalf of its 90 member organisations 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.

COGECA - the "General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives in the European Union" - represents the general and specific interests of some 22,000 farmers' cooperatives employing some 660,000 people and with a global annual turnover of 350 billion euros throughout the enlarged Europe. Since its creation, COGECA has been recognised by the European Institutions as the main representative body and indeed the spokesman for the entire agricultural and fisheries cooperative sector.

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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