

PROGRESS



With the financial support of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The new EU employment and social solidarity program with the financial support of the European Commission. Since 2008, CECOP is participating to a “Progress Network” project and enjoy a 3-year financing programme from the European Commission. Indeed, in its Social Agenda (2005-2010), the European Union has fixed as its main strategic goal to promote more and better jobs and to offer equal opportunities for all. Until now, the promotion of gender equality and the non-discrimination principle, employment measures and the fight against social exclusion were at the core of distinct Community programs. In order to rationalise and streamline EU funding, PROGRESS replaces four previous programmes that ended in 2006, including Equal.

PROGRESS financially supports policy development and its delivery in five areas: employment, social inclusion and protection, working conditions, non-discrimination and gender equality.

PROGRESS has six general objectives. These are:

1. To improve the knowledge and understanding of Member states situation through analysis, evaluation and close monitoring of policies.
2. To support the development of statistical tools, methods and common indicators in the areas covered by the programme (broken down by gender and age group where appropriate).
3. To support and monitor the implementation of Community law and policy objectives in the Member States to assess their effectiveness and impact.
4. To promote networking and mutual learning and identify and disseminate good practice and innovative approaches at EU level.
5. To enhance stakeholder and general public awareness about each policy area.
6. To boost the capacity of key EU networks to promote, support and further develop EU policies and objectives.

PROGRESS focuses on activities with a strong European dimension to guarantee an EU added value. These activities are designed to inform policy analysis and development. In this respect, PROGRESS differs from the ESF, which invests in the implementation of employment and social inclusion policies in the Member States.

PROGRESS funds three types of actions:

- ▶ Analysis
- ▶ Mutual learning, awareness and dissemination
- ▶ Support to main actors

One of the key objectives of the PROGRESS programme is to develop the participation and to promote dialogue with the various actors involved in the fight against social exclusion and poverty. It concerns particularly NGOs which are in a central position to influence policy in the EU. In this perspective, CECOP will receive a financial support from 2008 to 2010 and be a part of the European Combating poverty and social exclusion Network.

Within the framework of that partnership, CECOP's main activities for 2008 will include:

- ▶ increasing CECOP's European influence in promoting the growth of worker cooperatives, social cooperatives and social and participative enterprises as a value-based and sustainable enterprise model generating sustainable employment, social inclusion and poverty-alleviation, local and regional development, democratisation of the economy and empowerment of ordinary and poor citizens ;
- ▶ developing the knowledge-base on worker cooperatives, social cooperatives and social and participative enterprises ;
- ▶ reinforcing the organisational capacity of CECOP itself ;
- ▶ strengthening the CECOP network and national representative organisations under the coordination of CECOP, as a sustainable entrepreneurial system producing poverty-alleviation, social inclusion, sustainable employment and contributing significantly to local and regional development.

In recent years, Cooperatives have received a clear international recognition of their mission in terms of poverty alleviation and social inclusion. In particular, in The European Commission Communication on the Promotion of Cooperatives Societies in Europe, we can read "the co-operative structures are ideal to enhance employment and social cohesion."

Indeed, one of CECOP-CICOPA Europe's goals is to contribute to sustainable employment and social inclusion, local and regional development in Europe. The enterprises represented by CECOP-CICOPA Europe aim at providing concrete possibilities of sustainable employment and social inclusion to ordinary citizens, including those who are victims of social exclusion and discrimination because of gender, handicap, origin, etc.