

1<sup>st</sup> October 2015

## Toward a better support of enterprises integrating long term unemployed into the labour market?

*CECOP welcomes European Commission's (EC) proposal for a Council recommendation to support employers involved in labour integration of long-term unemployed through financial incentives and partnerships with public authorities*

*In Poland around 1,000 social cooperatives were created by at least one unemployed person and in Italy 35,000 persons considered in vulnerable situation are employed through social cooperatives*

CECOP, the European Confederation of Cooperatives active in industry and services, welcomes the European Commission's proposal for a Council recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market. **Over 4,000 social cooperatives** in the CECOP network have as their core mission the labour integration of disadvantaged groups, a large part of who are long-term unemployed.

CECOP fully welcomes the EC's proposal to **support employers** engaged in the integration of long-term unemployed into the labour market through financial incentives and partnerships with public authorities. Member states should guarantee that cooperatives are not discriminated against and can benefit from those measures like any other enterprise. "Characterised by a particularly high job tenure and strong economic stability, cooperatives in industry and services have been demonstrating, for decades, that they can be essential partners in providing a sustainable professional and social integration to the most disadvantaged citizens, being also resilient and innovative in the face of successive economic crises", says Diana Dovgan, Policy Officer of CECOP.

Key trends and figures from CECOP's network in the labour integration of disadvantaged persons:

- in **Poland around 1,000 social cooperatives** were created by at least one unemployed person.
- in **Italy** at least **35,000 persons** considered in vulnerable situation are employed through social cooperatives;
- in **Bulgaria** worker cooperatives are the **first employer for persons with disabilities**;

CECOP is glad that the EC mentions **prevention measures**, an important element which we have stressed on many occasions. Some member states, such as Spain or Italy, have put in place incentives encouraging unemployed persons to create a cooperative or to buyout the enterprise employing them and that is closing down. In France, only in 2014 around 800 jobs were saved that would probably have disappeared.

We regret that **any support for entrepreneurship initiatives by unemployed or long-term unemployed persons** is not foreseen in the proposal. **Today the youth is dramatically concerned with unemployment**, we regret that no measure is foreseen to encourage them to create enterprises, including cooperatives.

The cooperatives from the CECOP network fight against unemployment and social exclusion together with the most disadvantaged citizens. Democratically governed, sometimes by the most disadvantaged ones, they are capable to provide adapted and long-term integration. Thus they are ideal partners for member states on the issue of long-term unemployment.

Nevertheless cooperatives, including those focusing specifically on the reintegration of long-term unemployed, need an economic environment that is conducive to growth and jobs. “We thus appeal to the member states to embark on a clearer path away from pure austerity measures to embrace a resolute set of policies that will favour a fresh economic start for Europe”, concludes Bruno Roelants, Secretary General of CECOP.

Related documents:

- [CECOP answer to the European Commission’s consultation regarding the provision of services to long - term unemployed](#)
- [Cooperatives in Industry and Services urge EU Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs to invest in reindustrialization and active inclusion in Europe](#)
- [Cooperatives provide around 40.000 jobs to disadvantaged persons in Europe](#)

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**CECOP – CICOPA Europe** (*European Confederation of Worker Cooperatives, Social Cooperatives and Social and Participative Enterprises*) groups national organisations in 15 countries which in turn affiliate over 50.000 cooperative and participative enterprises in industry and services, the vast majority being SMEs, and employing 1.3 million workers across Europe. Most of them are characterised by the fact that the employees in their majority are members-owners, while some of them are second-degree enterprises for SMEs. Furthermore, around 4.000 of those enterprises are specialised in the reintegration of disadvantaged and marginalised workers (*disabled, long-term unemployed, ex prisoners, addicts, etc*).