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CECOP welcomes the new European Commission: it is time to reverse the curve for growth and jobs!

The new European Commission has started its 5 year term this week. CECOP, the European Confederation of Cooperatives active in industry and services, welcomes the new Commission of the elected President Jean-Claude Juncker and encourages it to reverse the curve of unemployment, increasing poverty and inequality in Europe.

We welcome the political guidelines Mr Juncker presented last July to the European Parliament, especially the announced Jobs, Growth and Investment Package proposed as part of the Europe 2020 Strategy's review. In our opinion, investment is a key instrument in favour of sustainable, smart and inclusive growth. Moreover how can Member States increase investment when European mechanisms, such as the European Semester, impose fiscal consolidation through austerity programs, translated in cuts in social security spending and public investment? CECOP calls on the new Commission to rectify this contradiction during this new term and to give a central place to the EU 2020 strategy. The EU 2020 strategy mid-term review foreseen for 2015 could be a great opportunity to reverse the curve. To this purpose, CECOP presents the following recommendations:

- A **balanced social and economic approach** in the EU which is, according to us, the only way to reach smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. EU 2020's social and employment goals should no longer be subordinated to the economic goals of the European Semester.
- A **stronger commitment towards the employment target** of 75% of the active population, which should be politically binding and requires a qualitative and not only a quantitative approach. CECOP invites the European Commission to observe that the cooperative enterprises of our network are characterised by a particularly high job tenure.
- A commitment to **sustain and increase investment by Member States**. Industrial and service cooperatives need investment in favour of a long-term sustained growth, for the re-industrialisation of the EU and of its regions, in sectors with high employment potential (such as the service sector), in the green economy, in education for the youth in cooperative entrepreneurship, in enterprise support services and adequate financial instruments.
- To encourage Member States to adopt **long-term social investment strategies**. More than 12,000 social cooperatives across Europe contribute to providing a dignified life to EU citizens through the provision of social services and work integration of the most disadvantaged; however, in spite of their recognized resilience, they will not be able to contribute to reaching the EU 2020 social objectives without social public investment.

The cooperative enterprises of our network have shown a particularly strong resilience in times of crisis and also a record of economic stability and steady expansion during periods of growth, while remaining embedded in their regions and without de-localizing. Our enterprises are thus natural allies of Europe, its countries and regions. "CECOP puts the experience of its 50,000 democratic and participative enterprises at the Commission's service to provide inspiration regarding their mechanisms, structures and principles. This said, the resilience of our enterprises will begin to show its limits if adequate European policies and a favourable environment for their development are not put in place." says Bruno Roelants, CECOP's Secretary General.

CECOP looks forward to collaborating with Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska who will certainly understand the entrepreneurial potential and challenges of industrial and service cooperatives in Europe. We trust that Ms Bieńkowska will demonstrate a strong commitment toward finalising the "Cooperative Roadmap", a set of policy measures designed to promote the development of cooperative enterprises across Europe initiated by the previous Enterprise Commissioner Antonio Tajani. CECOP also looks forward to engaging in fruitful collaboration with Commissioner Marianne Thyssen in order to strengthen industrial and service cooperatives' employment potential, including work integration of disadvantaged people by our network's social cooperatives, and their contribution toward social inclusion.

CECOP wishes to share the Manifesto of cooperatives active in industry and services with the European Commission, which contains what we consider to be a pressing work plan for this incoming term, and which can be downloaded [here](#).

CECOP's contribution to the EU 2020 strategy mid-term review can be downloaded [here](#).

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CECOP – CICOPA Europe (European Confederation of Worker Cooperatives, Social Cooperatives and Social and Participative Enterprises) groups national organisations in 16 countries which in turn affiliate over 50.000 cooperative and participative enterprises in industry and services, the vast majority being SMEs, and employing 1.4 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. More than a thousand worker cooperatives in the CECOP network were created as business transfers to employees of conventional enterprises in crisis or without heirs. Furthermore, around 4.000 of the enterprises of our network are specialised in the reintegration of disadvantaged and marginalised workers (disabled, long-term unemployed, ex prisoners, addicts, etc).