



ICA
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

Kigali (Rwanda)
14-17/10/2019

COOPERATIVES for DEVELOPMENT

ICA GENDER EQUALITY COMMITTEE

Presentation of Regional Committee
Europe

Presented by **Marjaana Saarikoski**

COOPERATIVES IN

The voice of cooperative
enterprises in Europe

Representing



84
members



33
countries



176,000
cooperative enterprises



141 million
cooperative members



4,7 million
employees





Equality between men and women in education, in economic decision-making and political power, and women's economic independence and equal earning are key for Europe's future.

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Employment rates have reached historically high levels in the EU and more women than ever are in positions of power, a lot remains to be done for equality between women and men:

- The labour market participation of women in the EU remains at about 11.5 pp. lower than that of men.
- Women's average pay is about 16 % lower than that of men.
- Women rarely reach the highest management positions, with only 6.3 % of CEO positions in major publicly listed companies in the EU being held by women.
- Attitudes and behaviours are changing very slowly, which shows a need for the continuous commitment of all actors.

Source: European Commission - 2019 Report on equality between women and men in the EU

In 2018, the European Commission put significant efforts in pushing forward and concluding open files on equality between women in men in the EU and its Member States: **work-life balance, overcome blockage on women on boards, ratification of the Istanbul Convention, evaluation on equal pay, measures to strengthen the role of equality bodies.**

It adopted a Reflection Paper “Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030” in the follow-up to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Compared to many other parts of the world, the EU is a good address for women. According to the 2018 Sustainable Development Goals Index and Dashboards Report, 11 EU Member States have a score of more than 80 out of 100 for Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality. .However, the reality is that even in the EU, where unequivocal gender equality is secured by law, equality between women and men is still to be accomplished in several Countries.

GENDER EQUALITY - A RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL

- Fundamental human rights
 - ✓ Equal rights for women and men, girls and boys

- Question of social justice and good governance
 - ✓ Equal access to—and control over—resources
 - ✓ Equal opportunities to achieve political, economic, social and cultural influence
 - ✓ Precondition for democratic development
 - ✓ Smart economics; crucial for poverty reduction

- International political mandate and a crucial goal
 - ✓ SDG 5 / Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – as actor of change

- Key for aid effectiveness

**Promoting gender equality
and woman's rights across
the world**

*Advancing gender equality through the UN 2030
Agenda for Sustainable Development*

- Gender equality, girls and women's rights are at the forefront of the EU's external relations. These core values are reflected in all EU policies and programmes,
- The new *EU consensus for development*,⁷¹ which proposes a shared vision and framework for development cooperation for the EU and its Member States, aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

COOPERATIVES EUROPE GENDER EQUALITY WORKING GROUP

Working together under the auspices of Co-operatives Europe

2017 - the Board of Cooperatives Europe decides to set up a **Gender Equality Working Group** coordinated by the Alliance of Italian Cooperatives Commission “**Women and Equality**” and chaired by Cooperatives Europe Vice President, **Stefania Marcone**

The Cooperatives Europe Working Group on Gender Equality is open and at present is composed by 28 colleagues, (included Cooperatives Europe Vice Presidents and Board members) coming from 11 European Countries and 2 sectoral European association (EUROCOOP AND CECOP).

In order to save money and time, the Working Group mainly work via zoom platform meeting.

The European Women cooperators are eager to work and exchange best practices, policies and programs with other colleagues of the ICA Global and Regional GEC Committees.

ACTION PLAN

Among the most important issues and proposals:

- to collect gender equality policies, data and best practices in the European cooperative organizations
- To enhance relationship and advocacy activity with EU Institutions, Commissions, Intergroups, DG, etc.
- to introduce a cooperative space in the EU We Gate platform, in order to explain the main values and targets of a cooperative company and the reasons why this company is suitable for women in business
- to organize institutional meetings to present the network and its objectives at European level with the support of Cooperatives Europe
- to follow the European calls which can be very useful to strengthen our network and find resources. (a project proposal was yet submitted past June by Italian, Bulgarian, Spanish, Danish cooperative organizations, in collaboration with Cooperatives Europe)
- to contribute and work on the Cooperatives Europe Manifesto in view of the next 2019 European Parliament Election in order to include a strong reference/message to gender equality
- to obtain a devoted space within Cooperatives Europe web site, according with the concrete activity of the Group/Network

ACTIVITY report 2017-2019

- ✓ April 2017: General Assembly of Cooperatives Europe in Malta, first meeting among women cooperators
- ✓ Autumn 2017: the Board approved the establishment of the Gender Equality Working Group
- ✓ November 2017 participation of European women cooperators in Kuala Lumpur ICA Gender Equality Committee Assembly and related events
- ✓ February 2018: first meeting of the Cooperatives Europe Working Group in Brussels
- ✓ On 17th May 2018, on occasion of the annual General Assembly of Cooperatives Europe in Denmark, a workshop has been organized on the theme “SDG No.5: the cooperative model for gender equality: where do we stand?”.
- ✓ On 21th June 2018, during Italian Alliance of Cooperatives meeting with Italian Member of the European Parliament, the Italian women cooperators presented to the Members of the European Parliament the Cooperatives Europe Gender Equality Working Group activity as well as the path towards the establishment of European Women Cooperators Network

- ✓ **April 2019 :zoom platform meeting**
- ✓ **June 2019: meeting in Strasbourg on occasion of Cooperatives Europe General Assembly**
- ✓ **July 2019: launch of the Gender disaggregated statistics survey**
- ✓ **Autumn 2019: Meeting in Brussels**
- ✓ **February 2020 High-level Conference with the new European Institutions**

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BEYOND THE ACTIVITY OF THE WORKING GROUP, SEVERAL EUROPEAN MEMBER ORGANISATIONS ARE QUITE ACTIVE AT DOMESTIC LEVEL IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY (ADVOCACY, POLICY AND PROJECTS, CORPORATE WELFARE, LIFE-WORK BALANCE, FINANCIAL TOOLS, TRAINING AND EMPOWERMENT, GOVERNANCE ISSUES, WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT AND FIGHT AGAINST VIOLENCE, GENDER AND GENERATIONS)

Thanks for your attention



International
conference

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