

PRESS RELEASE

More than 150 enterprises saved in Europe through business transfers to employees in 2012

Last year in Europe, more than 150 enterprises that were on the verge of being closed down, because no transfer plan or heir was found, have been successfully transferred to their employees under the form of a cooperative saving jobs and skills at the same time. CECOP – CICOPA Europe, the European Confederation of Cooperatives in Industry and Services has analyzed this model with a wide range of actors concerned by business transfers in the framework of the conference “Sustainable business transfers in Europe, with a specific focus on business transfers to employees” held in Brussels on 3rd June.

France, Italy and Spain are the countries where the biggest amount of successful business transfers can be found, whereas more isolated cases exist in the UK and Finland. It appears that certain factors explaining why business transfers to employees are more successful in some countries than others, such as; an adequate legal framework protecting and promoting worker cooperative enterprises, a high level of organisation and consolidation of worker cooperatives in federations and policy measures facilitating business transfers to employees.

In Spain 75 enterprises were transformed into cooperatives in 2012 according to the Spanish Confederation of Worker Cooperatives, COCETA. “A model that at the same time generates local wealth and allows employees to decide the direction of their life and the life of their enterprise”, the Director of COCETA, Paloma Arroyo underlined. She gave the example of the Spanish cooperative Sherlimp, active in textile cleaning, created 30 years ago through a worker buy-out.

The European Commission has estimated that around 150,000 enterprises employing around 600,000 persons may be lost over the next few years, if no transfer plan or heir is found for them. In line with this, CECOP-CICOPA Europe has published a document presenting the opportunities and challenges for successful business transfers in Europe.

“This is the appropriate moment for the EU to consider examples of saving enterprises, jobs and skills” has indicated the Secretary General of CECOP- CICOPA Europe, Bruno Roelants.

For more information read the document “Business Transfers to Employees under the Form of a Cooperative in Europe” here: <http://s.coop/1pq0a>

CONTACT:

Leire Luengo – Communication Officer + 32 2 543 10 36 - leire.luengo@cecop.coop

CECOP – CICOPA Europe (European Confederation of Cooperatives in Industries and Services) is a European confederation grouping national organisations in 17 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. Among the main sectors of activity, we find metal industries, mechanical industries, construction and public work, wood industry and furniture, white goods, textiles and garments, transport, media-related activities, social services, education and culture, environmental activities, etc. 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.