Press release | 13.03.2012

Social economy - cooperatives

EP votes for stronger social and solidarity economy

The European Parliament today adopted a report on strengthening European cooperatives and the wider social and solidarity economy (1) in the context of the UN year of cooperatives (2). Commenting after the vote, Green economic affairs spokesperson and draftsman for the report **Sven Giegold** said:

"The European Parliament has voted to underline the importance of the social economy for Europe. During the crisis, actors in the social economy, particularly cooperatives, have proven more resilient and able to provide more stable employment in times of turmoil. Cooperatives also have a vital role to play in delivering the EU's 2020 strategy, notably in the areas of social cohesion, climate protection and sustainable management.

"Improving the European Cooperative Statute would help ensure we maximise the potential of the sector. This means adapting the statute further to the needs of the members of cooperatives and their employees. In 2004, the European Commission set out twelve measures to promote cooperatives in Europe but only three of them have been implemented as of yet. The Commission must make progress on this urgently.

"With regards to the social and solidarity economy, the report calls for the beginning of an open process to exchange best practice between EU member states. National and European rules must be improved when it comes to public procurement, state aid, tax and industrial policy - for example to facilitate employee takeovers, which would save jobs.

"The cross-political support for the report underlies parliament's commitment to promoting entrepreneurial diversity in Europe."

(1) The European cooperative sector comprises 160,000 businesses, with 120 million members and 5.4 million employees.

(2) http://www.un.org/en/events/coopsyear/

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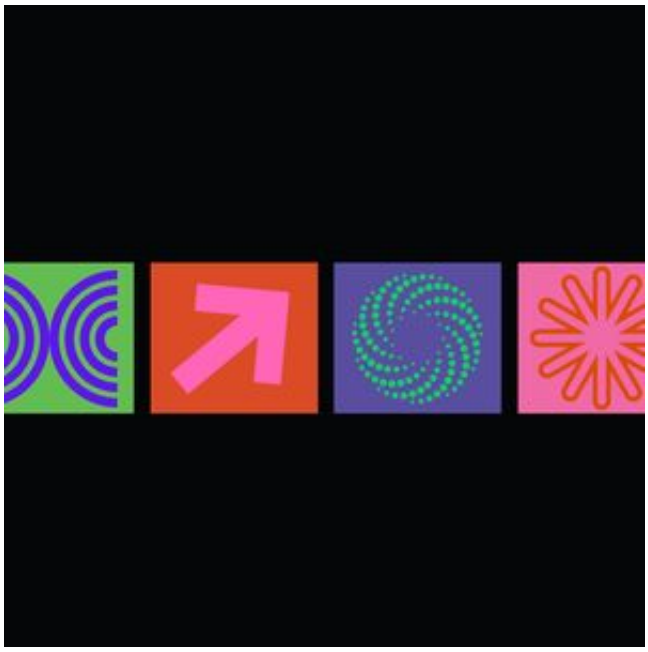
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Sven Giegold

Member

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