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Round Table – Table ronde – Runder Tisch

**AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES – EVOLUTION, IMPORTANCE,
PERSPECTIVES**

**COOPÉRATIVES AGRICOLES – EVOLUTION, PORTÉE,
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Agricultural Cooperatives – Evolution, importance, perspectives

Greek agricultural cooperative organizations

1. Generalities

The formation of agricultural cooperatives has been another method to boost agricultural production and overcoming the limitations of small landholdings and fragmentation. Farming cooperatives were first officially established in Greece in 1915. The first Law has been the Law n. 602 of 1915 and last the Law n. 2810 of 2000.

The first Greek Cooperative Law was based on the German and Austrian cooperative Laws. At the time the first cooperative law was introduced, the Greek agricultural sector was characterized by extreme market failure conditions. Usury and extreme middlemen profits were very common, creating intolerable conditions for small farmers, which represented the vast majority of Greek farmers.

The next major change in the legal framework for cooperatives came in 1979 with the enactment of L. 921/1979, which replaced L. 602/1915 but only for agricultural cooperatives. In this way, Greece moved to cooperative legislation, which separate laws for each type of cooperative (e.g., agricultural consumer, etc.).

In year 1915, 150 agricultural cooperatives existed in Greece, in 1930 568, in 1970 7.391 and in 1991 7,137, in which 912,468 members enrolled. Today there are about 7,200 Cooperatives functioning in Greece, with 120 Unions and 19 Central Unions of Cooperatives. The Pan-Hellenic Confederation of Unions of Agricultural co-operatives is the governing organization; it has a coordinating and advisory role but it is not engaged in commercial activities. It has been estimated that approximately the 75%-80% of the holders of agricultural exploitations, enrolled in at least one cooperative. The aforementioned number is bigger than the number of the persons who work in the primary sector¹. The causes are: a) the double registrations, without which the number of the members decreases to 780.000; b) the fact that anyone who is not a farmer but an owner of agricultural land can be a member of an agricultural cooperative; c) anyone who is involved in a relative activity to the activities carried out from the cooperative. This fact re-enters the neo-capitalistic evolution of cooperative movement.

The average number of the members for a cooperative, on national scale, is 128. In 1987 the value of the agricultural products that have been commercialized by the agricultural cooperatives constituted 23% of the total; in 1999 this percentage went up to 28%.

¹ The number of agricultural holdings is estimated at 773,800 giving an average area of 4.5 Ha per holdings, usually subdivided into 6 or 7 parcels. Only 0.1% of holdings cover an area greater than 100 Ha.

The agricultural employment constitutes 20% of the total employment, compared to 30% twenty years ago. Measured in Annual Work Units of labour it dropped from 956,000 units in 1980 to 644,000 in 1996.60% of the heads of agricultural holdings are over 55 years of age.

At the beginning of the 80s, the importance of agriculture for the Greek economy was still more obvious than today. The political change, which took place after the elections in 1981, carried a decisive change of agricultural politics towards the cooperative movement.

Generally speaking, the cooperative movement in Greece has not been developed to a satisfactory level.

The cooperative structure is built up vertically with provincial cooperative unions and a national federation of unions. Every Greek government has supported cooperatives, or some aspects of their activities, as part of its agricultural policy. Cooperatives also take specialized forms, such as credit unions and marketing ventures. Under the socialist governments of the 1980s and the 1990s, cooperatives were greatly enhanced. A large portion of agricultural credit was allocated via cooperatives. Investment incentive laws, which were primarily directed to manufacturing and tourism, were also extended to cooperative farming investments, and the direct marketing of agricultural produce was encouraged in order to bypass the frequent monopolistic private wholesalers of produce.

2. Definitions – sources

The legislation distinguishes the category of the agricultural cooperatives² from the other types of cooperatives, which are the “building cooperatives”³, the “civil cooperatives”⁴ (i.e. of consumption, of transport, of tourism etc.) and the “insuring cooperatives”⁵.

Building cooperative, in a generalized manner, has as its exclusive scope supplying its members’ land in the urban zones or resort areas and the reformation, the reconstruction and the readjustment of residential zones in favour of its members.

The civil cooperatives are constituted from associates of other professional classes except for those occupied in agriculture. These cooperatives are:

- a) of consumption
- b) of credit
- c) of transport
- d) of tourism
- e) of assurance
- f) of druggist
- g) of supplying and market
- h) of production
- i) of sale.

The last three altogether are also called handicraft cooperatives.

The Insuring cooperatives have the scope of the self-insurance of workers who do not have a permanent employer or they have more than one.

According to the law an Agricultural Cooperative Organisation (ACO) is “the autonomous, independent association of persons, which is formed voluntarily and aims, with the mutual aid of its members, at their economical, social, cultural development and advance, through

² Law n. 2810/2000, in (OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC), OJ A’ 61/9.3.2000.

³ Presidential Degree n. 93/1987, in OJ A’ 52/1.1.1987.

⁴ Law n. 1667/1986, in OJ A’ 196/6.12.1986.

⁵ Ministerial Decision n. 55575/1965, in OJ B’ 816/7.12.1965, art. 80 to 87.

a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise". The fishing, stock-farming, aviculture, apiculture, silkworm breeding, forestall agrituristic, agro-handicraft, and other cooperatives, from every branch or activity of agricultural economy⁶, are considered as ACO.

As we can see the definition of ACO coincides with the definition given by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA)⁷.

The qualifying element is the specific agrarian activity that the ACO carries out. This Law, according to the intentions of the Ministry⁸, "aims to reduce the number of the 'rules' and leaves to the statutes of the same ACOs the task to see to the ulterior indispensable regulation, so that this can be adapted every time to the requirements of the various types of cooperative and to the choices and consequential decisions of their members. The participation of the Law maker to define the statute of ACOs, is so to speak, 'auto limited' and remains only the Constitutional obligation of vigilance on them".

The formation of Law 2810/2000, according to the Introducing Report, is based on:

- Article 12, Paragraph 5, of Greek Constitution, which defines that cooperatives are self-governed according to the rules of the Law and their own statute and they are under the protection and the supervision of the State, which is obliged to care for their development.
- The Statement on the Co-operative Identity, defined by ICA in the World Congress of Cooperatives in Manchester in 1995, where the Cooperative principles⁹ are included.
- Draft of the Negotiation on the Statute for a European Cooperative Society (SCE), as it has been defined by the beginning of year 2000. (Now Council Regulation (EC) No1435/2003).
- The UN Reports about Cooperatives, specially the 1998 Report of the Secretary General on Status and Role of cooperatives in the light of new economic and social trends¹⁰.

3. Constitution of agricultural co-operative societies

As we have seen the ACO can have any social object, as long as it is suitable for the economic, social and cultural development of its members. In the second section of paragraph 1 of Law 2810/2000, some other type of cooperatives are indicatively enumerated, that according to the law are considered as agricultural (that is to say fishing, stock-farming, aviculture, apiculture, silkworm breeding, forestall, agrituristic, agro-handicraft, and other cooperatives, from every branch or activity of rural economy).

⁶ Art. 1, p. 1, Law n. 2810/2000, in OJ A' 61/9.3.2000.

⁷ <http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc/ivic/orgs/ica/index.html>

⁸ Introducing Report of Law n. 2810/2000, Hellenic Ministry of Rural Development and Food, in www.minagric.gr (in Greek).

⁹ 1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership
2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control
3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation
4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence
5th Principle: Education, Training and Information
6th Principle: Co-operation Among Co-operatives
7th Principle: Concern for Community

¹⁰ <http://www.copacgva.org/a-54-57.htm>

The Law deliberately avoids enumerating thoroughly the type of activities that the co-operative will develop for the accomplishment of its aim. This happens because it should be left free, in order that the cooperative develops its activity to all the directions that are considered necessary in order to complete its aim, as long as this activity is permissible from the current legislation.

The co-operative share is the minimal pecuniary sum of participation of each member in the capital of the cooperative. Each member participates in the cooperative with one obligatory share. The height and the conditions of payment are fixed by the statute. The co-operative share is indivisible and equal for all the members.

The statute can provide terms and conditions on the acquisition by the members of the additional obligatory shares, depending on the height of their transactions with the co-operative. In the significance of transaction the products and the supplies that are supplied the members from the cooperative are included, as well as the products that they allocate to this or via this to third persons. In that case the statute fixes the corresponding votes to the additional shares. The total number of votes cannot, in any case, exceed the number of three. The increase or the reduction of the height of share takes place with a decision by the general assembly.

The statute can also provide the terms and the conditions on the acquisition of optional shares from the members, the workers in the cooperative and third persons. In this case it can provide privileges in favour of the optional shares. The optional shares do not allocate a vote.

Members of the co-operative can become adults, who exercise an activity relative to the cooperative's aims, capable of legal act. Those who are placed under juridical or legal prohibition or juridical perception cannot become members.

Provided that it is foreseen by the statute, legal persons can become members of cooperatives. They must have as their constitutive aim the exercise of rural enterprise; which is served by the activities of the cooperative. More specific terms and conditions of their participation as well as their representation are determined by the statute.

For the approval of the statute an application from the provisional administrative council is submitted in the responsible County court, which is tried at the process of volunteer jurisdiction. If the statute is not law-abiding, the County court postpones the decision-making and it calls the provisional administrative council to proceed to the essential corrections or to supplement the lacks in five weekdays. Then a decision of the County court is published which if the application is accepted, the statute is registered in the Book of Registration of Rural Cooperatives, that is observed in the County court, with the indicative number of the relative decision. From this registration, the ACO acquires legal personality and commercial capacity.

The State monitoring and control constitute the content of articles 16 and 17 of the 6th Chapter. The monitoring is relative to the law-abiding operation and aims to assist the work of the agricultural co-operative organisations. In the monitoring, inter alias, the observation of the provisions of laws and the statute, the application of decisions of the general assembly, the verification of payment of the value of co-operative shares or other economic obligations of the members are included as well as the verification of the balance-sheet, the remaining annual economic relations and the accountancy books.

The monitoring of ACO is practised by the Minister of Agriculture or by controlling bodies authorised by the Ministry of Agriculture. It can also be assigned, by decision of the Minister of Agriculture and to chartered auditors. The controllers check the legality of decisions and acts of the enacted bodies, the accountant order and the economic situation. The Minister of Agriculture can request the realisation of extraordinary control. The auditors

can request an extraordinary convocation of the general assembly on the discussion of subjects that emerges from the control.

4. Organisation; Management structure of agricultural co-operative societies

The general assembly constitutes the maximum body of the cooperative and it is composed by the members that have fulfilled all their economic obligations to the cooperative. In the general assembly each member has a vote. The statute can fix that the associate allocates also more than one vote, up to three. The legal persons participate in the general assembly with their legal representative. The statute fixes the possibility or not of the representation of a member in the general assembly and the representation in the voting. In any case an attending member can represent only one absent member.

The general assembly decides on each subject that does not belong to the competence of another body. In the exclusive competence of the G.A. belong:

- a) The modification of the statute.
- b) The merge, the transformation, the extension of duration and the dissolution of the cooperative.
- c) The election and the retraction of members of the administrative council.
- d) The approval of the balance and account "Results of Economical Use" and the determination of the way of disposal of surpluses of use.
- e) The surcharge of members from, possible, damage.
- f) The change of value of co-operative share.
- g) The imposition of contribution to the members.
- h) The approval of a programme of enterprising action and growth of cooperative and the corresponding budget.
- i) The annual budget of expenses.
- j) The exemption from any responsibility of members of the administrative council.
- k) The voting of Internal Regulation of Operation and Regulation of Official Situation of Personnel.
- l) The purchase and sale of real estates.
- m) The decision on the constitution and operation by the members of the co-operative of Sector-based Organisations of Production of Agricultural Cooperative, that corresponds to the sectors of production and to the basic products or activities of the cooperative.
- n) Any other subject that is foreseen by the statute.

The G.A. is convened by the administrative council in a regular session once a year and takes place in the Head office of the cooperative at the maximum of six months from the expiry of use. The administrative council can call extraordinary G.A. on reasons, that are foreseen by the law or the statute, or when this is imposed by the interest of the cooperative. The process of convocation of the G.A. and address of its work is fixed by the statute. One fifth of the members of the cooperative can request through the administrative council the convocation of an extraordinary G.A., reporting obligatorily to their application the discussion subjects. If the administrative council does not convene the general

assembly in twenty days from the submission of the application, the above mentioned members have the right of convocation.

The G.A. sits validly, provided that at the beginning of the meeting are present or are represented members of the cooperative, with right of vote; the above have to represent half of the total number of votes. If lack of quorum is realised at the beginning of the meeting, the G.A. assembles without new invitation at the same place, the same day and hour next week and with the same subjects of the initial daily provision. In this repetitive meeting, quorum exists, whatever the number of votes represented in that is. With the exception of the decisions that concern: a) change of aim of cooperative; b) merge with another cooperative; c) transformation of cooperative; and d) dissolution of cooperative, the G.A. is found in quorum and it sits validly, provided that, at the beginning of the meeting, the members of the co-operative who are present or represented and have the right of vote will be at least the two thirds of all votes.

If this quorum does not take place, the G.A. calls a repetitive assembly, according to the procedure that is fixed in the previous paragraph, therefore is found in quorum, provided that in the beginning of the meeting are present or represented members that have the right of vote and represent at least the half number of all votes.

The G.A. decides with secret voting on the subjects: a) Elections; b) Exemption from the responsibility of members of administrative council; c) Approval of the balance-sheet, assessment and table of results of use; d) Personal subjects.

In case of not exemption from the responsibility of members of administrative council or not approval of balance-sheet, assessment and table of results of use, the general assembly, in the same meeting, after hearing the report of the controllers, decides on the retraction or not of the members of the administrative council and the election of a new one. In case of retraction the general assembly, in the same meeting, elects provisional administrative council, which is compelled in a deadline of twenty days to convene G.A. on the subject of election of new administrative council. The members of administrative council are eligible, they participate in the voting for the subjects of exemption from their responsibility, only with the votes they have themselves.

The number of the members of the administrative council is fixed by the statute. It is always uneven and no smaller than three members. The administrative council is elected by the G.A. The duration of service of the members of the administrative council is fixed by the statute and it cannot be longer than four nor shorter than two years. The advisers can be re-elected and they are recalled freely by the G.A. The statute can foresee the attendance in the administrative council, by an additional member, representative of the cooperative's personnel.

The administrative council represents the cooperative juridically and extrajudicially. This representation can be assigned to the Chairman or to another member or to the General Director. The administrative council can also assign the exercise of its competences to one of its members or to other executive or employee of the cooperative. The administrative council decides with the absolute majority of the present and represented members. Each advisor can represent validly only an absent advisor. The administrative council is responsible for decisions, generally, on any subject that concerns the administration of the cooperative, the management of its property, its affairs and the objectives that the cooperative has. The competences of the administrative council are determined by the statute.

The members of the administrative council are accountable commensurable for any damage, that is caused, with their culpability, in the cooperative at the exercise of their duties. The relative claims go in prescription after three years by the performance of action, unless it is damaged by deceit, therefore are written off after ten years.

The statute can foresee the benefit: a) Of Compensation for members of the administrative council, on their employment with affairs of the cooperative, which are assigned to them by special decision of the administrative council. The height of this compensation is determined with decision of general assembly; and b) Expenses of movement and representation for the members of the administrative council for the attendance of the meetings, the height of which is determined by a decision of the G.A.

If the chairman or a member of the administrative council is litigant with the cooperative, the cooperative is represented by a specifically authorised member, unless the G.A. names special representatives. The statute can foresee the possibility of appointment by the administrative council of a General Director (Manager), in which it assigns with convention of work, the partial or total exercise of the powers and competences of the administrative council, minus those that, according to the law or the statute, require collective decision, as well as general management and management of the affairs of the cooperative. By decision of the administrative council the rights, the obligations and the competences of the General Director are determined. The convention and the wage of General Director should essentially receive the previous special approval of the G.A. The attribute of General Director is not incompatible with the attribute of member of the administrative council.

Between the administrative council and the general director a works contract is contracted. The duration of it cannot be fixed less than three years nor longer than five. The contract can foresee a test period up to one year. In this contract the following should be at least determined: a) the objectives that the general director should achieve during his service and their timetable of achievement; b) The annual, at least, process of controls for the ascertainment or not of the achievement of the objectives; c) The reasons of revocation of the contract by the cooperative; d) The terms and the conditions of revision of the contract; e) The terms and the conditions of moral or material reward of the general director, especially in the case of important overlap of the objectives, owed to his faculties, initiative and effectiveness.

5. Operation – Dissolution

The¹¹ administrative council of the ACO decides on the acceptance or not of the application of registration of a person as a member of the cooperative, in a deadline fixed by the statute. If the application is rejected or if the administrative council do not decide on the aforementioned deadline, the interested part can appeal to the first regular G.A., which finally decides.

The statute fixes the impediments for the registration of member as well as the terms and the conditions of exclusion and withdrawal, the minimal time duration of participation and the terms and the time of yield of cooperative shares. In the case of a member's death, the heir or when more heirs exist the one that was indicated with their written agreement, provided that meets the conditions to be a member of the cooperative, enters all the rights and the obligations of the member that died. In a different case, the nominal value of the share, as by any chance it has been increased or decreased proportionally, is attributed to the heirs at the end of use.

The¹² rights and the obligations of the members are obligatorily fixed by the statute, which should contain provisions that regulate: a) the attendance of members in the general assemblies of the cooperative; b) The right to vote and be elected; c) The participation in the distribution of surpluses of administrative use, as it fixes the statute; d) The

¹¹ Article 6 Registration – Retirement – Deletion – Death of member. Law n. 2810/2000.

¹² Article 7 Rights and obligations of members. Law n. 2810/2000.

participation of the members in the activities and the transactions of the cooperative; e) The conformity to the decisions of collective bodies of the cooperative, the terms of statute and the internal regulation of operation. The statute can foresee sanctions against the members, for not fulfilling their obligations to the co-operative.

For¹³ the obligations of the cooperative to third parties, members are limited accountable, up to the limit that the statute fixes. The amplitude of their responsibility is connected only with the obligatory and additional obligatory shares. The responsibility of the members towards the creditors of the cooperative is subsidiary and it only emerges provided that the lenders are not satisfied with the assets of the co-operative. The member is accountable in the same way and after his exit from the cooperative for debts, that were created when it was a member, or for previous debts which he accepted at his registration. The claim of thirds against the member goes in prescription after a five-year period from since its exit. The liability of members ceases in any case after one year from the end of the bankruptcy or the liquidation of the cooperative. The creditors of a member of a cooperative do not have a right on the assets of the cooperative or surpluses of uses or co-operative shares, obligatory or optional, for debts of the member to them.

They cannot be objected to seizure or interim measures, for debts of members to a third person: a) the return for the use of assets that has been granted to the co-operative; b) The products of production of members, which were delivered to the co-operative for sale or disposal to the market, unaltered or after transformation; c) The price of products of case b.

The seizure in the hands of the cooperative, as a third person, is not allowed for money which has been received by credit institutions as loan on behalf of a member, as well as supplies in goods of the co-operative to its members.

The subject of merge of co-operative organisations has constituted a central subject for Greece, because of the need of increased competitiveness in the frames of EU's single market. Because of these factors, cooperatives sought merges and collaborations in order to bear the competition and as counterpoise in the merges and purchases of big capitalistic enterprises that are activated in the agricultural sector.

For Greece, the subject of merges of cooperative organisations is also different from many other countries. The size of the problem is constituted by the big number of small co-operative organisations. The differentiating element consists of the different geographic configuration of the country and the significance that is attributed to the merge. As economic significance and expediency, the merge interests when the units that arise acquire or can acquire a superior economic size from the sum of the individual ones.

This Law fixes the process of merge of ACOs at the same degree, with the constitution of a new ACO or with the absorption of one or more from other existing. The process that is provided foresees decisions of general assemblies, assessment of value of assets from independent three-member committees, way of adaptation share price that is under the value of the co-operative share of the new organisation, approval of the new statute and election of a new administrative council. The ACOs that are incorporated are exempted from the obligation of payment of tax, dues of stamp and additional levies, as for the merge.

The Law provides the possibility of transformation of an A.C.O. of second or third degree in Stock Corporation or company of limited responsibility. As in the case of merge, a decision of the G.A. is required for the transformation, that is received with the quorum and majority that is fixed in articles 11 and 12 accordingly.

An ACO is declared in bankruptcy if it ceases the payments of its debts and provided that it is asked by any creditor that has a legal interest or from the administrative council or by the

¹³ Article 9 Responsibility and obligations of members to third person. Law n. 2810/2000.

liquidators and decides the Court of first instance of its head office. Energies for avoiding bankruptcy are also foreseen with imposition of extraordinary contribution to the members.

The ACO is dissolved: a) If their time of duration is expired, which is fixed in the statute and its extension was not decided by the G.A.; b) With decision of G.A. that is received with the exceptional quorum and majority; c) With their declaration in situation of bankruptcy; d) With decision of the Court of first instance of its head office, that is published after application of the administrative council or the 2/3 of the total number of their members or supervising authority.

The regulation regarding the disposal of the rest of the assets is left in the statute because of the different regulations that the cooperatives can select in managing the economic relations of the cooperative with the members.

With the exception of the case of dissolution of an ACO caused by their declaration in bankruptcy and at which the process of Commercial Law is followed, the dissolution follows in any other case the stage of liquidation. The liquidation is held by special liquidators, who are fixed by the G.A., unless the statute fixes otherwise. The operation of the dissolved ACO is continued, according to the provisions of the Law, on the needs of liquidation.

6. Federation of the cooperative societies

For the application of the sixth cooperative principle, regarding the collaboration among cooperatives, for the maximisation of their effectiveness, the Law establishes the frame of this collaboration, in the form that the co-operatives themselves will judge essential. First degree cooperatives can recommend unions among them, with their objective the aid, the enlargement and the co-ordination of their activities. The unions of cooperatives can also undertake activities from those that are foreseen for their members or on behalf of them.

It is obvious that with this provision that concerns the activities of the unions is not sought the covering but the subsidiarity, that is to say the undertaking of activities from that level which is offered more for the particular activity. This constitutes concern of the first degree and secondary cooperative organisations, because otherwise it can rival the first degree cooperative the union in which it participates as a member. In such a case a conflict with the first cooperative principle would exist, that "can become members (physical or legal) those who can use the services of co-operative organisation" and no its competitors.

For the constitution of union of cooperatives the decision of general assemblies of the cooperatives that wish the constitution of a union and the syntax, the signature and the approval of statute from the first instance court of its Head office are required. The Law does not fix a minimum number of members for the constitution of a union. The previous laws sought the creation of big unions. In practice the results existed meagre almost non-existent.

The business territory of union of ACO is also fixed by the statute. The law determines the basic rules of operation of G.A. of Union. The G.A. is composed of the representatives of cooperatives of members. The representative of cooperative practises all the rights of cooperative in the G.A. of union, acting in the frame of decisions of the G.A. and administrative council of its co-operative.

In the union, each member allocates at least one cooperative share and a vote. The statute fixes the terms and the conditions on the acquisition from the members of additional cooperative shares depending on the height of transactions of each cooperative with the union for a determined period of transactions. It also fixes the corresponding in the shares votes, which cannot exceed the number of five.

For the administrative council of union the same rules with the administrative council of first degree co-operatives are in effect.

Central Co-operative Unions (C.C.U.) are constituted by unions of rural cooperatives for activities on a wide scale in a certain sector of rural production, in a certain product, in similar products or in services. The rules that are in effect for the unions are also in effect for the central unions. The statute of C.C.U. can foresee the participation in them and first degree co-operatives which do not participate in a union of co-operatives.

Two or more ACO of any degree can recommend consortium of ACOs for the best service of their aims. The C.C.O. is considered for the organisation and their operation as secondary cooperative organisations and the same provisions are in effect for them.

It is foreseen that ACOs of each degree, their consortia and the cooperative companies can recommend among them and with third individual or legal stock corporations or companies of limited liability. These companies are considered cooperative companies when the 51% of at least their corporate capital belongs to ACOs or to their cooperative companies. The action of cooperative stock corporations is always nominatives also in the case of transfer of action or shares, with the participating organisations of co-operative character having a right of preference.

The Law provides secondary and third degree ACO with the possibility of merge and consortia with cooperative companies.

As it is obvious, with the provisions of those articles in the co-operatives are provided all the possibilities of constitution of institutions that would serve their aims.

The Pan-Hellenic Confederation of Unions of Rural Cooperatives (PASEGES¹⁴), constitutes the ideological and coordinative organisation of the ACOs. Members are the unions of ACO, but the statute can foresee that members can become central unions, consortia, cooperative companies and other common enterprises with other institutions. The PASEGES has the entire Greek territory as its business territory, represents its members throughout the interior and abroad, it sees to the observation of co-operative principles and the growth of the co-operative idea, it has an advisory role for subjects of policy that concern its members and undertakes other not commercial activities that serve its members.

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¹⁴ www.paseges.gr

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