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The cooperative movement in Italy: size, entity, economic values. Social cooperation in Italy: size, entity, economic values. The evolution of cooperation and social cooperation as a tool for the solution of people's problems: health, community cooperatives, confiscated goods, and more . Inter-cooperatives collaboration at the European level: ideas for new achievements

The paper focuses on the numbers and the role of cooperation, and in particular, of social cooperation in Italy.

The cooperative movement has over 13.5 million members and nearly 1 million and 350 thousand employed. It achieves an aggregate turnover of almost 161 billion euros, of which 8.5 billion from exports.

The Alliance of Italian Cooperatives represents, in economic terms, over 93% of the Italian cooperative movement and in terms of employment over 84%.

In this context, social and health cooperation includes around 14 thousand cooperatives that provide social and welfare services to over 7 million people. Almost 420,000 people are employed, mostly women, of whom 40,000 are disadvantaged.

Cooperatives in the social and health supply chain operate in the field of social assistance and personal services, in particular in social health services (including those with a high specialization in health care), welfare, education and employment for disadvantaged people.

Then there are the cooperatives among doctors, mainly linked to the diffusion of the various forms of associated medicine, and the pharmaceutical cooperatives, active in the intermediate distribution of pharmaceutical and parapharmaceutical products and, in some cases, also active in the direct management of pharmacies (in this the last sector also includes consumer cooperatives and those between retailers). In this model of new multi-professional, cooperative and integrated welfare, which combines the management of care processes in a logic of continuity, there are also the mutual societies that have over 450 thousand members.

The experience of Italian social cooperation and the strategic evolution of the sector constitute an important example of high-performance solutions and an alternative to give solutions to people's problems, with respect to capitalist solutions in the strict sense. In particular, the territorial roots and the centrality of the person make social cooperatives a virtuous example of a company at the service of communities.

Despite profound regulatory differences, the paper questions possible synergies that can be activated by the dialogue with the German experience.