

## ICA CCR EUROPEAN RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2022

*“Rethinking co-operatives: From local to global and from the past to the future”*

13-15 July 2022, Athens Greece

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& ΜΕΛΕΤΩΝ (ΙΣΕΜ)

**Title of abstract: Gender Equality as an autonomous cooperative principle**

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**Abstract:**

One way of safeguarding the co-operative identity is to continue to address the challenges that are still pending, including achieving gender equality in the co-operative world. While it is true that progress is being made in achieving the necessary equality, it is not happening at the desired pace. The current results are still insufficient and it is necessary to continue exploring and debating new strategic visions in this field, such as the one we propose and defend in the paper we are presenting for the committee's consideration.

This is none other than to reflect on the practical scope that gender equality would have as another principle, outside the first principle where it is now contemplated, whose own entity would lead to the incorporation of positive actions in regulations that would promote and accelerate the much-desired effective equality, given that the current approach which considers equality as transversal to all co-operative principles is not bearing the desired fruit. The first principle speaks of non-discrimination, not equality, and the two concepts are not entirely equivalent.

For this, starting from the study of the latest institutional documents on gender equality, such as the "ICA Strategic Plan 2020-2030"; "Women, Business and the Law 2021" of the World Bank Group; Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5): which recognises that, "Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but is one of the essential foundations for building a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world"; the Spanish Government's "Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities 2018-2021", as well as, the various most representative cooperative laws in Europe. We consider the advisability of considering "gender equality" as a new cooperative principle, as has been recognized in Spain by Law 2/2014 on Andalusian Cooperatives. This, in our opinion, would favor the aspiration to achieve greater recognition of the role that women play in cooperatives and would facilitate the implementation of legislative measures that would encourage, for example, the presence of women in the social bodies of cooperatives. and apply more effective gender equality policies.

Keywords: co-operative principles, gender equality, gender equality policies