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

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& ΜΕΛΕΤΩΝ (ΙΣΕΜ)

Title of abstract: The cooperative principles after Seoul 2021

Dante Cracogna, dcracogna@estudiocracogna.com.ar

Abstract:

The XXXIII ICA Conference held in Seoul at the end of 2021 had the theme of deepening the co-operative identity. The fact that in 2020 (the year initially planned for the Congress) it will be 125 years since the founding of the ICA and 25 years since the Declaration on the Co-operative Identity made it a particularly appropriate occasion to analyse the theme. Until now, no conference had ever set out to consider only one theme exclusively.

Although the global health situation did not provide the most appropriate framework, the various plenary and parallel sessions that took place, as well as the Researchers' Conference and the 3rd International Forum on Co-operative Law, provided an opportunity for a wide-ranging debate on the subject. It now remains to systematise the many and varied contributions made and using them to make them useful for the current situation of the global co-operative movement and its future prospects.

The two revisions of the co-operative principles that took place after their first formal declaration in 1937 took place thirty years apart at the Conferences of Vienna in 1966 and Manchester in 1995. This could lead to think that it is time for a new revision, given that a new period of three decades is approaching and that the conditions of today's world justify it.

Faced with this attitude, it is worth considering that an adequate interpretation of the co-operative principles that allows to reconcile their essence with the changing requirements of the economic and social context, can be a useful expedient. And, at the same time, it would avoid a reformulation that would affect the reception of the principles as they have already been incorporated in numerous legislations and in relevant documents of international organisations, such as Res. 56/114 of the UN Assembly and Recommendation 193 of the ILO.

Keywords: co-operative principles, co-operative identity

