Abstract

In this paper, the author seeks to locate the role of agricultural cooperatives as an instrument for implementing rural development, understood as one of the two pillars of current European CAP. Cooperatives are a type of business organisation widespread in rural areas that has proved to be specially suited to promoting any kind of economic activity, avoiding depopulation and enhancing social cohesion in those areas. Cooperatives are versatile legal entities that may easily adapt to the requirements of new rural development policies. In that respect, cooperatives supply an already existing business network from which newly launched initiatives would benefit, making possible the development of supplementary economic activities that would represent additional sources of income and jobs. In this context, the author discusses the legal devices designed to promote economic cooperation in the field of Spanish legislation on cooperatives. Special attention is given to those statutory attributes which allow cooperatives to go beyond the economic integration of their members, and explore new patterns of economic cooperation with other rural actors. Finally, the author suggests some ways of promoting private-public partnership

Keywords

business integration, economic cooperation, cooperatives, contracts, social economy networks