



MAPPING: KEY FIGURES

NATIONAL REPORT: FRANCE

ICA-EU PARTNERSHIP



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I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This report is part of a Mapping exercise launched by the International Cooperative Alliance and its regional offices, within the framework of a partnership signed with the European Commission for the period 2016-2021. The programme aims to strengthen the cooperative movement and its capacity to promote international development. Other research projects led within this partnership include a worldwide Legal Frameworks Analysis, and several thematic researches on themes of significance for cooperatives.

Responding to challenges and existing knowledge gaps facing the cooperative movement, this research seeks to provide exhaustive information on cooperatives worldwide. This is achieved through a process jointly conducted by the ICA and its four regional offices – Cooperatives of the Americas, Cooperatives Europe, ICA Africa, and ICA Asia-Pacific – using a common methodology. Each office collected the input of ICA members present in the countries within its geographic area, by using the same questionnaire, and completing it with relevant national statistics, in order to obtain an accurate picture of the national situation. Mapping out cooperatives in each country provides a more precise picture of the cooperative context at national and regional levels, enhances the movement's visibility, networking, partnerships opportunities, as well as advocacy, and empowers cooperators by providing them tools for positive change.

Within this framework, the present report showcases information about the cooperative landscape in France.

i. Historical background

The origins of the cooperative movement in France date back to the middle of the 19th Century, with the aims of improving working conditions during the industrial revolution and gaining fairer distribution of wealth.¹ At that time, one of the best-known models for cooperation at this time was that of Louis Blanc's *Ateliers Nationaux de France*, which allowed unemployed workers in the cities to work on grand public projects. The country benefits from a broad history of cooperation with various currents, including agricultural, financial, worker and consumer cooperation, as well as other forms. Thinkers such as Charles Fourier, George Fauquet, Charles Gide, Bernard Lavergne and Albert Thomas would all influence the historical trajectories of cooperative thought in France.

The revolutionary events of 1848 were followed by the emergence of numerous worker associations and production cooperatives between 1849 and 1855, with the production cooperatives most often linked to trade union activism. By 1890, around 200 cooperatives were counted by the Ministry for Industry, mostly city-based artisans. Freedom of association became progressively more developed towards the end of the 19th Century, leading 29 cooperatives to establish a federation in 1884, the *Chambre consultative des associations ouvrières de production*. This federation served as a centre for exchanges of information and advocated for the introduction of laws to support the cooperative movement.

As Raffiesen inspired financial cooperatives spread across Europe to Western France, in the north the cooperative movement was influenced by neighbouring Belgium, where there was

¹ O. Pletschette, 'D'une tradition fondatrice des coopératives de production au fleuron économique intersectoriel d'aujourd'hui: L'histoire du mouvement coopératif en France', 2018, p.1

mutual support between cooperative and socialist movements.² This contrasted with the “Nîmes school” of cooperation, favoured by consumer cooperatives, which sought for a politically neutral cooperative movement in France in order to encompass consumers regardless of their political views. This division in the consumer cooperative sector would last until 1912, when the two consumer cooperative federations merged to form a national union of consumer cooperatives.³

The post-war period saw a broad development of cooperatives in the finance and banking sectors, production and agricultural cooperatives, which were historically linked via the provision of credit to farmers. The economic crisis of 1929 saw divisions reemerging within the cooperative movement, despite the unitary approaches promoted by cooperative theorists such as Fauquet.⁴ After the Second World War, the General Law on cooperatives of 1947 had a large impact on shaping the variety of cooperative types in France and provided a general framework to build on the initial legal provisions that had gradually developed in sectors including agriculture, low-cost housing cooperatives, production, worker cooperatives and consumer cooperatives.⁵

Despite a crisis in the consumer cooperative movement, the latter half of the twentieth century saw a stronger increase in employment and job creation by cooperative enterprises than the economy as a whole.⁶ For example, for worker cooperatives, the cooperative society (SCOP) and its regulation under the 1978 law was linked to strong growth in the French cooperative movement, and by 1983 the *Confédération générale des Scop* counted nearly 1300 member cooperatives representing 24,000 worker-members.⁷ Over time, the number of SCOPS has continued to grow across all sectors, today the largest numbers are found in construction, industry and services.

In 2001, legislation emerged on the Société coopérative d'intérêt collectif (SCIC), allowing people to organise around a common objective with the aim of social utility, or with a link to the sustainable development needs of an area.⁸ They also enable a variety of stakeholders to go into partnership on a common project and their membership includes employees, services users and contributors.

Since 1968, the broad and wide ranging cooperative movement in France has been represented by Coop FR.⁹ The French cooperative movement has continued to evolve in size and importance, and Coop FR today spans 23,000 cooperatives, with nearly 29 million members and 1.2 million employees. The French cooperative sector notably makes up 40% of the country's food industry, 30% of the retail industry and 70% of retail banking.¹⁰

² Ibid, p. 3

³ Ibid, p. 4

⁴ S. Celle, 'The metamorphosis of the cooperative ideologies in French capitalism during the inter-war period (1919-1939)'. The 28th Annual EAEPE Conference 2016 - Industrialisation, socio-economic transformation and Institutions, European Association for Evolutionary Political Economy, Nov 2016, Manchester, United Kingdom.

⁵ L. Seeberger, 'History of the evolution of cooperative law from its origins to the present day', Recma, no. 333, July 2014.

⁶ Smith, C. and Rothbaum, J., 'Cooperatives in a Global Economy: Key Economic Issues, Recent Trends, and Potential for Development', IZA Policy Paper, Policy Paper No. 68 September 2013.

⁷ Pletschette (2018), p. 5

⁸ M. Maignan, 'The collective interest cooperative company (SCIC), a social innovation: performativity of alternative models in the third sector organizations.' Reimagining, Rethinking, Reshaping: Organizational Scholarship in Unsettled Times 30th EGOS Colloquium, Jul 2014, Rotterdam, Netherlands. halshs-01468643.

⁹ CoopFr, 'Qui sommes nous?', available at: <https://www.entreprises.coop/nos-missions>

¹⁰ Ibid.

ii. Public national statistics

For a more comprehensive picture of the cooperative movement in France, the present section provides key data from the country's public registers as a useful background context to the ICA members' data showcased in Section II of the report. The data presented here stems mostly from L'Observatoire national de l'économie sociale et solidaire (National Observatory of the Social and Solidarity Economy, or 'ONESS') statistics published in the Coop FR's report 'Panorama des Entreprises Coopératives Edition 2020', the 2015 Cooperatives Europe Report 'Power of Cooperation', as well as the the Institut National de la Statistique et Etudes Economiques (INSEE).

NUMBER OF COOPERATIVES:

Data from Cooperatives Europe shows that France had more than 22 500 cooperative organisations in the year 2015.¹¹ In the same year, INSEE figures show that there were a total of 3 820 122 enterprises in France, meaning cooperatives made up nearly 0.7% of the total enterprises in the country in that year.¹² More recent data from the ONESS shows France had 22 600 cooperative enterprises in 2018.¹³

EMPLOYMENT:

According to INSEE, there were 26 745 000 employees in France in 2018.¹⁴ Data from the ONESS shows 1 300 000 people employed by the French cooperative sector in the year 2018.¹⁵ Data from Coop FR suggests that more than 4.8% of French employees were employed within its cooperative parameters in 2018.¹⁶ According to INSEE, which provides data based on legally defined cooperatives, those in the workforce in the cooperative sector numbered 308 532 in 2015.¹⁷

COOPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP:

According to data from the ONESS, France had around 28 700 000 members of cooperative organisations in 2018. From a population of 66 891 000 in the same year, these figures mean that nearly 43% of the French population were members of a cooperative.¹⁸

PRODUCTION VALUE:

In 2018, the overall GVA of the country stood at 2 091 billion euros, according to data from INSEE.¹⁹ Data from Coop FR from the same year shows French cooperatives had a turnover of

¹¹ CoopFR, 'Panorama des Entreprises Coopératives: Edition 2020', 2020, p. 5

¹² INSEE, 'Les Entreprises en France: Edition 2017', 2017, p. 65

¹³ Cooperatives Europe, 'The power of cooperation: Cooperatives Europe key figures 2015', 2015.

¹⁴ INSEE, 'Une photographie du marché du travail en 2018', InseePrémère, March 2019, p. 1

¹⁵ CoopFR, op cit, p. 5. This figure is based on parameters defined by Coop FR whose cooperative parameters include enterprises controlled by one or a group of cooperatives or, in other words, their non-cooperative subsidiaries.

¹⁶ Ibid, see end of publication

¹⁷ INSEE, 'L'économie sociale en 2015, Connaissance locale de l'appareil productif (Clap)', see graph entitled 'Effectif salarié de l'économie sociale par famille de l'économie sociale et par secteur d'activité'

¹⁸ INSEE, 'Bilan démographique 2018', InseePrémère, January 2019, p. 2

¹⁹ INSEE, 'Les Entreprises en France Edition 2019', December 2019, available at:

<https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4255733?sommaire=4256020>

321 billion euros.²⁰ Although these figures are not directly comparable, they demonstrate the significant contribution France's cooperative sector to overall economic activity.

iii. Research methodology

The aim of the mapping research is to collect and make publicly available reliable and up-to-date data to understand what the cooperative movement represents in the targeted country. With this view, the data detailed in the present report has been collected using the methodology detailed below.

The methodological tools include a questionnaire used to collect the data, which was distributed online to members, as well as a methodological note provided for further guidance. They were built jointly with all ICA regional offices with the support of external experts from the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises (Euricse) and are applied in a harmonised way in all the target countries.

The classifications used in the research are consistent with the internal system used within the ICA movement (e.g. on membership status and types of cooperative organisations) and with standards increasingly adopted in recent studies and by international organisations like the ILO – e.g. using international classifications of economic activities such as the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) rev. 4, which ensures the comparability of statistics both nationally and internationally, as well as with statistics on other forms of enterprises.

Regarding the target organisations, considering that a worldwide survey has very challenging goals, and while the value of directly collecting data from non-member cooperatives must be recognised, the present Mapping exercise targets cooperative organisations members of the ICA.

Furthermore, in order to complete the ICA members' data, the decision was taken to also look at external sources, to provide additional and more exhaustive cooperative statistics for the country. As a result, the data is collected following two strategies contemporaneously: 1) collecting statistics already available in the country; 2) carrying out a survey targeting ICA cooperative members.

In France, data was provided by CoopFR, a member organisation in the country. After some additional follow-up and clarifications from the member, the figures provided were compiled to be presented in the next section.

²⁰ CoopFR, op cit, p. 5

II. KEY FIGURES

This section presents the results of the data collection directed by the contributing ICA members. It is different from the general estimates for the country provided in the introduction – as the coverage represents the vast majority of the total number of cooperatives in the country. France counts **5** ICA member organisations, Confédération Nationale du Crédit Mutuel, Crédit Coopératif, Fédération Nationale des Caisses d'Epargne ('FNCE'), Fédération Nationale des Coopératives des Consommateurs (FNCC) and CoopFR.

Confédération Nationale du Crédit Mutuel is a full ICA member and cooperative bank owned by its member-customers. They have over 2,000 local banks in France. Regional groups of Crédit Mutuel cover the entire national territory.

Crédit Coopératif is a full ICA member and diversified banking group, which offers a wide range of banking products and services, especially to businesses and organisations, in the different sectors in which it is involved.

FNCE is a full ICA member and the representative body of 15 cooperative *caisses d'épargne* (savings funds), owned by 4.8 million members through 228 local savings companies. Its missions include shaping the network's strategic directions; building relationships between the network's members; defining, promoting and coordinating socially responsible actions of the network; and promoting and representing the network in France and internationally.

FNCC is a full ICA Member and represents the professional branch of French consumer cooperatives. Among its activities, it represents itself as well as these cooperatives and their consumers.

CoopFR is a full ICA member and the national apex organisation²¹ for French cooperatives, who they represent in public and abroad. Its purpose is to raise awareness of cooperative specificities, values and principles; be a place of exchange for member federations and cooperative organisations; and to represent and defend the interests of cooperative enterprises at national, European and international level.

Its member organisations are active in the following sectors, ordered here by decreasing order of importance – from the highest to lowest number of memberships:

- Banking
- Wholesale and retail trade
- Agriculture and food industry
- Industry
- Real estate activities
- Transport

²¹ Defined in the present research methodology as "the umbrella organization at national level in which all sectors of cooperatives (and/or mutuals) converge and that is responsible for promoting the cooperatives (and/or mutuals) in the country and providing services to the cooperative(and/or mutuals) members."

iv. ICA member data

The data collected was provided by CoopFR for the year **2018** and, where possible, aligned with the questionnaire. While a significant portion of the data from the questionnaire could be compiled, data could not be provided for Youth, whilst complete sectoral data was not available for cooperatives in the education and human health and social work activities sectors.

v. General overview

The present section provides an overview of the ICA membership data for France. It is displayed in several categories and with the support of graphs, for clarity purposes.

Category	Total
Number of cooperatives	22 589
Number of memberships	28 740 713
Number of employees	1 290 664

ICA members represent **22 589** cooperatives in the country, with a total number of memberships²² of **28 740 713** and a total number of **1 290 664** employees.²³ While no economic data was available for all member organisations at the national level, some sectorial data could be provided and is broken down below.

vi. Sector overview

The table below corresponds to publicly available 2018 data from CoopFR in the 2020 document '*Panorama des entreprises coopératives: Edition 2020*'.²⁴ The data has been reclassified in line with categories used in the ISIC rev. 4. to classify the economic activities carried out by the organisations concerned. Data from CoopFR also provides figures for "Scolaire" cooperatives,²⁵ which are not included in the table below, as these include statistics covering educational projects in which students participate.

²² Defined in the Mapping methodology as: the number of persons who initially signed the application for registration and those admitted in accordance with the cooperatives' bylaws and who currently participate in the organization in accordance with the cooperatives' bylaws.

²³ Defined as: all those workers who hold the type of job defined as paid employment jobs.

²⁴ CoopFR, op cit

²⁵ Ibid, p. 18.

	Cooperative type	No. of cooperatives	Members	No. of employees	Turnover in millions of EUR
Banking		4 634 ²⁶	27 272 251	335 133	74 300
Agriculture and food industry	Agricultural cooperatives	14 140 ²⁷	336 396	190 000	84 400
	Maritime ²⁸	100	4 500	1 265	700
Wholesale and retail trade	Trader (<i>Commerçants</i>)	103	31 000	559 740	156 000
	Consumer (<i>Consommateurs</i>)	40	900 000	5 500	1 300
Industry and services²⁹	Artisan cooperatives	133	22 325	72 032	1200
	Cooperative social enterprises (<i>Scic</i>)	868	65 245	7 769	400
	Worker cooperatives (<i>Scop</i>)	2 369	32 747	52 429	5 000
Real estate activities	Social housing ³⁰ (<i>Hlm</i>)	165	74 375	2 509	400
	Housing (<i>Habitants</i>)	13	250	-	-
Transport³¹		24	1 624	64 287	105
Totals		22 589	28 740 713	1 290 664	323 805

²⁶ According to CoopFR, this includes 86 regional banks or funds; 6 federal or interfederal banks; and 4547 local banks

²⁷ Includes **2 400 agricultural cooperatives; 11 740 agricultural equipment cooperatives**, CoopFR, op cit, p. 18

²⁸ 2016 data

²⁹ In France, Scop and Scic cooperatives are active in both the industry and the services sector, with the majority (approximately 70%) included here active in the latter. For clarity purposes, both are included in the category 'Industry and services', which covers 'Other services' as outlined by ISIC. rev 4.

³⁰ Turnover data from 2017

³¹ 2016 data

The table below provides totals by sector for the information provided in the table above:

Sector	Total no. of cooperatives	Total membership	Total no. of employees	Total turnover in millions of EUR.
Banking	4 634	27 272 251	335 133	74 300
Agriculture and food industry	14 240	340 896	191 265	85 100
Wholesale and retail trade	143	931 000	565 240	157 300
Industry and services³²	3 370	120 317	132 230	6 600
Real estate activities	178	74 625	2 509	400
Transport	24	1 624	64 287	105
Total	22 589	28 740 713	1 290 664	323 805

³² Corresponds to cooperatives active in industry and services, see footnote 27.

vii. Gender

CoopFR also report on the position of women in the governance of French cooperatives.³³ According to CoopFR, gender equality is respected in the governance of major cooperative banks.

By contrast, more traditionally male sectors have less representation of women. In agricultural cooperatives, women make up only 9% of administrators, and in artisan and transport cooperatives, women make up only 4% of administrators. In trader and maritime cooperatives, women make up just 10% and 20% of presidents, respectively.

However, in sectors with a majority of female employees or where female membership is more than 45%, one can observe an important contrast in the representation within the management or the presidency of companies cooperatives, wherein women are significantly represented in administrator roles but less so at the top level. This is particularly the case in user cooperatives. For social housing cooperatives, for example, women make up 23% of administrators but only 8% of presidents. Similarly, for consumer cooperatives, women make up 45% of administrators but only 20% of presidents.

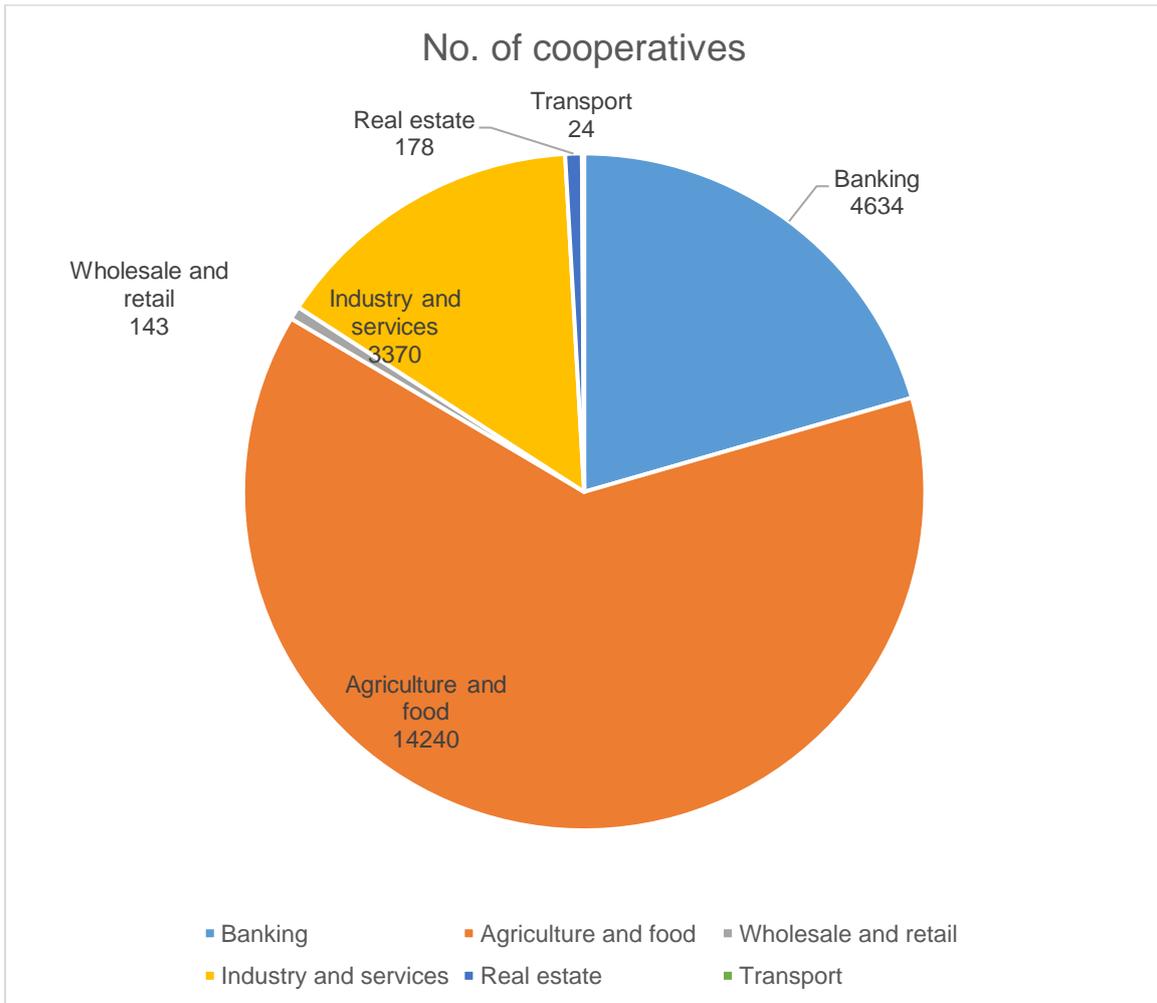
In worker cooperatives that are notable for employee involvement, female employees make up 28% of presidents and, for social enterprise cooperatives, 24% of presidents.

³³ Coop FR, op cit, p. 13

III. GRAPHS

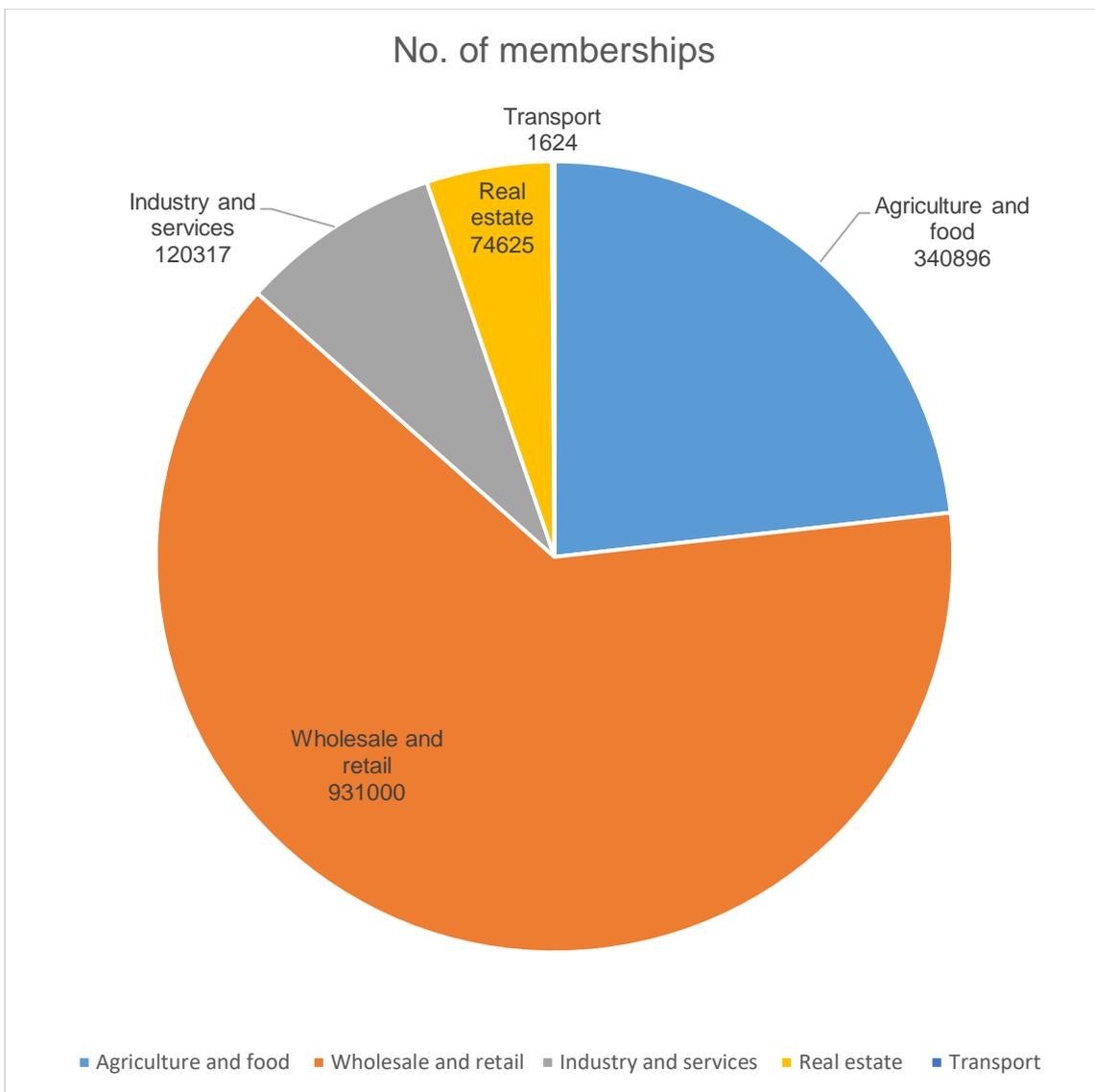
Specific variables are also detailed in the graphs below, when sectorial data was available.

viii. Number of cooperatives by sector:

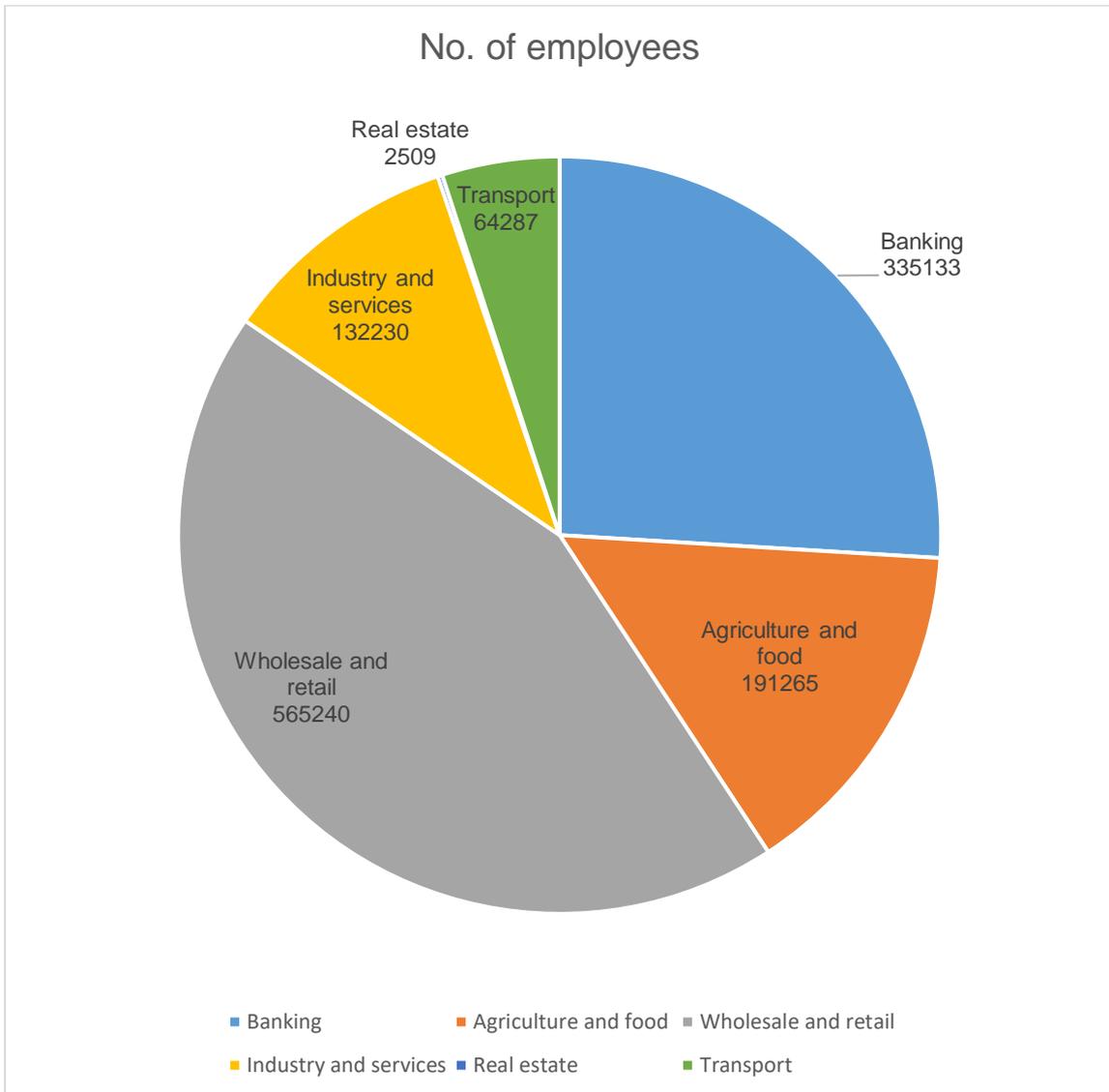


ix. Number of memberships by sector

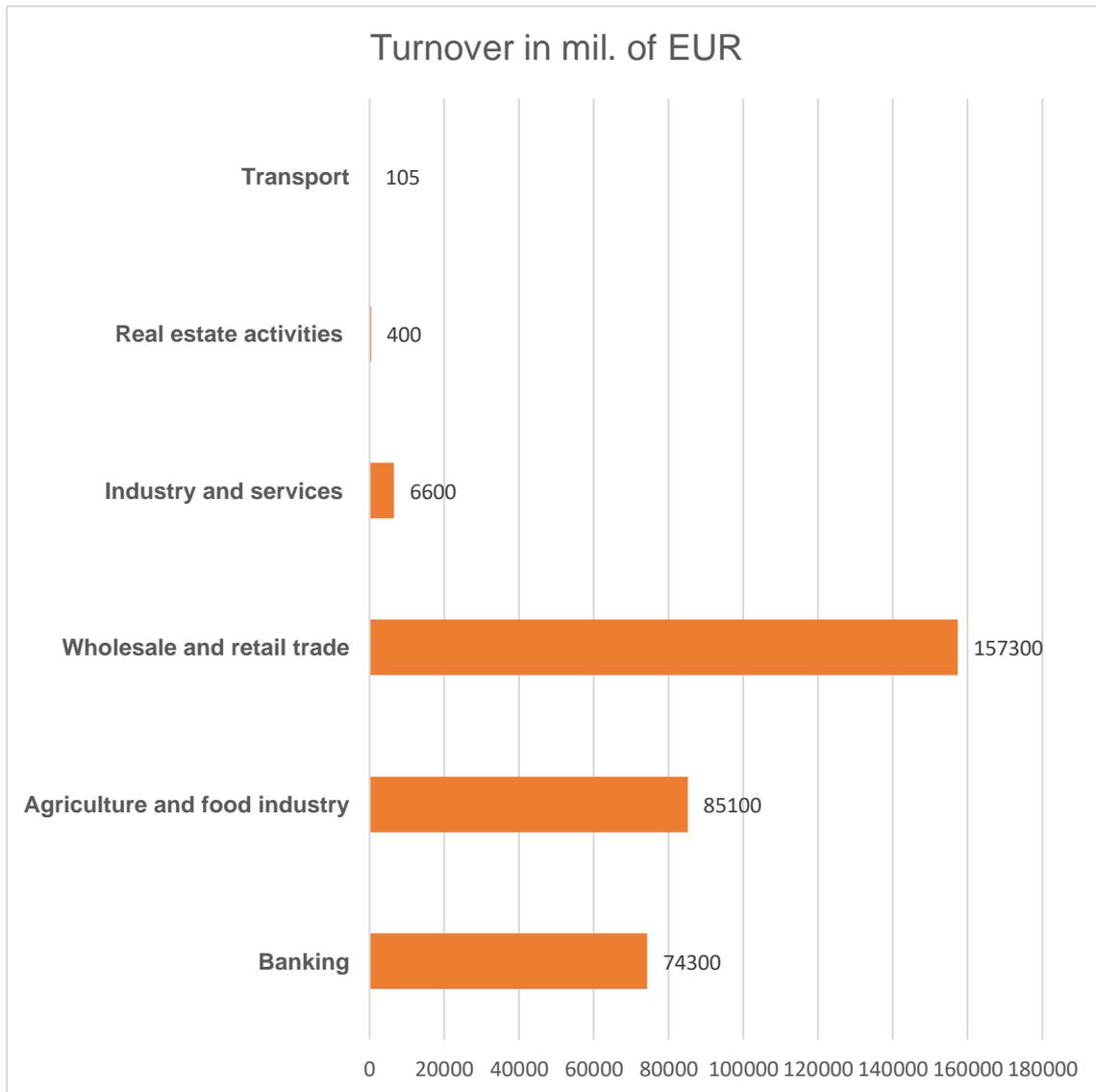
With 27 272 251 members, the banking sector alone represents nearly 95% of all cooperative members in France. Therefore, to allow for visual representation of French cooperative membership by sector, the banking sector is excluded from the following graph.



x. Number of employees by sector



xi. Turnover by sector in EUR:



IV. ANNEXES

Sources and contacts are listed below.

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Publications by statistical bodies:

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Contacts

Further details on the Mapping research and other country reports are available on www.coops4dev.coop

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