



# **WOMEN IN THE COOPERATIVE SECTOR**

## WOMEN IN THE COOPERATIVE SECTOR

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This study was prepared on the occasion of the International Women's Day 2021, by Eduardo Pedroso, within the scope of CASES Statistics and databases Team.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. THE PORTUGUESE COOPERATIVE SECTOR IN NUMBERS.....	6
3. WOMEN IN THE COOPERATIVE SECTOR .....	12
3.1. THE WOMEN COOPERATOR.....	12
3.2. THE WOMEN MANAGER .....	13
3.3. THE WOMEN EMPLOYEE.....	15
4. COOPERATIVE SECTOR CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 5 - GENDER EQUALITY.....	18
5. CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	24
METHODOLOGICAL NOTE.....	26

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1 – GVA, Compensation of employees and Employees (FTE) of Cooperatives, SESA 2010, 2013 e 2016.....	7
FIGURE 2 – Cooperatives equivalent to IPSS by ICNP/TSO (No.), SESA 2016.....	8
FIGURE 3 – Distribution of Cooperatives by their main Cooperative Branch, Accreditation Portal 2019 .....	9
FIGURE 4 – Distribution of Cooperatives by dimension, SESS 2018.....	10
FIGURE 5 – Aggregation of Cooperative ages, SESS 2018.....	10
FIGURE 6 – Main geographical area in which Cooperatives developed their activity, SESS 2018 .....	10
FIGURE 7 – 5 main users, beneficiaries or customers of Cooperatives, SESS 2018 .....	11
FIGURE 8 – Networking or partnership in Cooperatives, SESS 2018.....	11
FIGURE 9 – Evolution of the gender distribution of Cooperatives individual Members, Accreditation Portal 2017-2019	12
FIGURE 10 – Gender Distribution of Top Management and Top Managers of Cooperatives and Social Economy, SESS 2018 .....	13
FIGURE 11 – Distribution of gender by different Governing Bodies, Accreditation Portal 2019 .....	14
FIGURE 12 – Gender Distribution of Middle Management of Cooperatives and Social Economy, SESS 2018 .....	15
FIGURE 13 – Gender Distribution of Middle Management of Cooperatives by dimension, SESS 2018.....	15
FIGURE 14 – Gender distribution of employees in Cooperatives, Social Economy and National Economy, SESS 2018....	16
FIGURE 15 – Gender Distribution of Cooperatives employees by Cooperative Branch, Accreditation Portal 2019 .....	16
FIGURE 16 – Gender Distribution of Cooperatives volunteers, Accreditation Portal 2019 .....	17
FIGURE 17 – Gender composition of the different hierarchical levels of the Cooperatives, SESS 2018.....	19
FIGURE 18 – Adoption of “quotas” to ensure a minimum representation threshold by gender, Social Economy and Cooperatives, SESS 2018 .....	20
FIGURE 19 – Average hourly earnings (€ / hour) Total and by Gender, SESS 2018.....	20
FIGURE 20 – Gross wage gap between men and women, SESS 2018.....	21
FIGURE 21 – Adoption of salary parity policies between men and women, SESS 2018 .....	21
FIGURE 22 – Gross monthly remuneration per employee by size and total, SESS 2018.....	22
FIGURE 23 – 5 main measures adopted by Cooperatives to reconcile professional and personal life, SESS 2018 .....	23

1.

INTRODUCTION

The struggle of women for gender equality in all spheres of society and the economy, which includes areas as varied as equal opportunity in civic participation, education, employment, reconciliation of professional and private life or even the fight against wage discrimination, remains a necessity today. Gender equality and women's empowerment emerge as one of the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, although it also integrates all dimensions of inclusive and sustainable development.

In this context, the cooperative model based on principles of free membership, equity, solidarity, participatory decision-making and common ownership, can play a fundamental role in expanding opportunities for gender equality. Cooperatives are inclusive spaces where women can create their own job opportunities, overcome economic exclusion, promote their education and training, and where through democratic governance they can get involved in decision-making, power-sharing and division of responsibilities.

In this sense, CASES - Cooperativa António Sérgio para a Economia Social, intends to highlight through this report the role that thousands of women play in the Portuguese Cooperative Sector, which can be observed in three ways: the women as a cooperator, as a leader and as a worker.

To achieve this objective, data from two important sources of information were used, namely the Social Economy Sector Survey 2018 (SESS), which provides important data regarding the management practices of Cooperatives and the gender composition of their human resources - workers and managers; and information extracted from CASES Cooperative Accreditation Portal, which, although it includes only Cooperatives active in Mainland Portugal registered in that Portal, not constituting, therefore, an exhaustive representation of all existing Cooperatives in the country, allows a representative and comprehensive gender analysis in different domains.

It should be noted that this report also alludes to data from the Social Economy Satellite Account (SESA), which although it does not indicate anything about gender differences in the Social Economy sector and in the Cooperatives group, it provides important economic data for a better understanding of the Cooperative Sector.

## 2.

## THE PORTUGUESE COOPERATIVE SECTOR IN NUMBERS

The Social Economy Satellite Account (SESA)<sup>1</sup> is a valuable tool for the knowledge and recognition of the economic dimension and the main characteristics of the various entities that form the Social Economy sector in Portugal, as well as supporting the definition of public policies for the Sector. In this sense, successive cooperation protocols have been carried out since 2011 between CASES and Statistics Portugal (INE, IP)<sup>2</sup> and since 2012 three editions of SESA were made<sup>3</sup> (2012 edition with data from 2010, 2016 edition with data from 2013 and edition 2019 with data from 2016), which compile, within the National Statistical System methodological and conceptual framework, the most relevant economic information of the social economy sector.

SESA thus allows to identify in Portugal more than 71 thousand entities of Social Economy, mostly Associations with altruistic goals (92.9%), which in 2016 generated 3.0% of the Gross Value Added (GVA), 5.3% of the Compensation of Employees and 6.1% of Employees (Full-Time Equivalent - FTE) of the National Economy. Compared to 2013, all these important macroeconomic indicators increased in the Social Economy sector, showing greater dynamism than the total economy. Furthermore, considering a longer period (2010-2016), it is even possible to observe a countercyclical behaviour in Social Economy performance.

The Cooperative Sector, being an integral part of the Social Economy sector, emerges as the second largest group within the Social Economy families, with 2 343 entities, which accounted for 3.3% of the Social Economy Sector.

In 2016, this group was responsible for, approximately, 13% of the GVA and of the Compensation of Employees of the Social Economy and 11% of the Employees (FTE), noting that all these variables increased compared to 2013, in particular the GVA, which increased more than 20% – Figure 1. It should also be noted that this group of just over 2 300 entities generated 0.4% of the national GVA, 0.7% of the Compensation of Employees and 0.6% of Employees (FTE).

<sup>1</sup> SESA has been, since 2013, included in the Portuguese Social Economy Framework Law, according to which "*the creation and maintenance of a satellite account for the social economy, developed within the scope of the national statistical system*" must be ensured (number 2, article 6). Available at (only in Portuguese): <https://dre.pt/pesquisa/-/search/260892/details/normal?q=Lei+n.%C2%BA%2030/2013%2C%20de+8+de+maio>

<sup>2</sup> Although it is CASES legal responsibility to ensure the realization and maintenance of the SESA, under the terms of paragraph p), article 4 of Decree-Law no. 39/2017, of April 4th, since SESA is part of the National Statistical System (NSS), which is in turn the responsibility of the national statistical authority (INE, I.P.), SESA is done in partnership with INE, I.P. Available at (only in Portuguese): <https://dre.pt/web/guest/pesquisa/-/search/106824980/details/normal?q=Decreto-Lei+n.%C2%BA%2039%2F2017>

<sup>3</sup> Available at: <https://www.cases.pt/contasatelitedaes/>

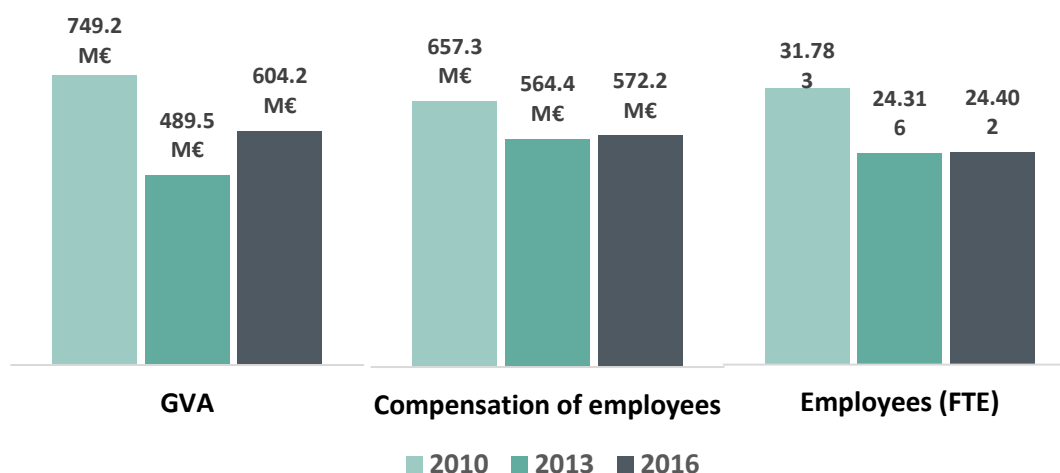


FIGURE 1 – GVA, Compensation of employees and Employees (FTE) of Cooperatives, SESA 2010, 2013 e 2016

It is important to note that all these variables showed the same growth behaviour in the period under analysis: decrease between 2010 and 2013; increase between 2013 and 2016. This is due to the period of economic recession that the Portuguese economy was going through in the period between 2010 and 2013. The Cooperative Sector represents a significant part of the mercantile sector of Social Economy whose activities, present in almost all sectors of activity of the Economy, are most affected by the macroeconomic context. However, it is worth noting the recovery observed in 2016, especially in terms of GVA (+ 23.4%), higher than that seen in the Social Economy (+ 14.6%) and almost three times higher than the growth of the National Economy (+ 8.3%).

According to the International Classification of Non-Profit and Third Sector Organizations (ICNP/TSO) <sup>4</sup>, the main activities carried out by the Cooperative sector were trade (17.3%), community and economic development and housing (14.3%) and industry (13.9%). In terms of the structure of the GVA and compensation of employees, financial and insurance activities stood out, which, corresponding to only 3.9% of the total number of Cooperatives, were responsible for 42.4% of GVA and almost 1/3 of the compensations of employees of this Social Economy group.

<sup>4</sup> The ICNP/TSO, defined in the United Nations manual used by SESA as a methodological basis, categorizes a set of activities typically associated with entities within the perimeter of Social Economy, allowing them to be characterized with greater rigor and, simultaneously, establishing a relationship with other existing economic activity classifications commonly used in the NSS, namely the Portuguese Classification of Economic Activities - CAE Rev.3 (which corresponds with the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Activities - ISIC Rev. 4).

With regard to employees (FTE), cooperatives that operated in education domains stood out (22.5% of the total employees in this group).

In 2016, SESA also identified 156 Cooperatives equivalent to Private Social Solidarity Institutions (IPSS), the majority of which were devoted to Social Services activities, followed by Education and Human Health – Figure 2.

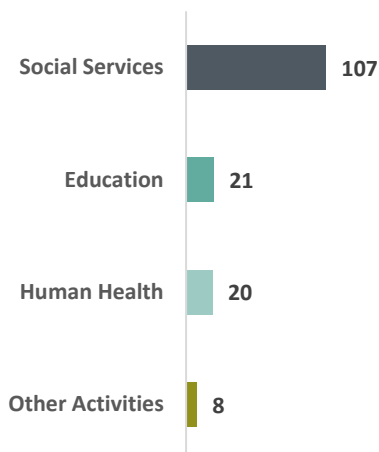


FIGURE 2 – Cooperatives equivalent to IPSS by ICNP/TSO (No.), SESA 2016

40 Cooperatives with the status of Non-governmental Organizations for the disabled (ONGPD) and 6 with the status of Non-governmental Organizations for development (ONGD) were also identified.

It should be noted that SESA does not, however, provide disaggregated economic information for these kinds of special status.

SESA also does not provide information to the Cooperative Sector considering its different Cooperative Branches. However, according to the most recent data from the CASES Accreditation Portal, in 2019 close to one third of registered Cooperatives had for main Branch the Agriculture one, followed by Services (15.7%) and Social Solidarity (12.9%) – Figure 3.



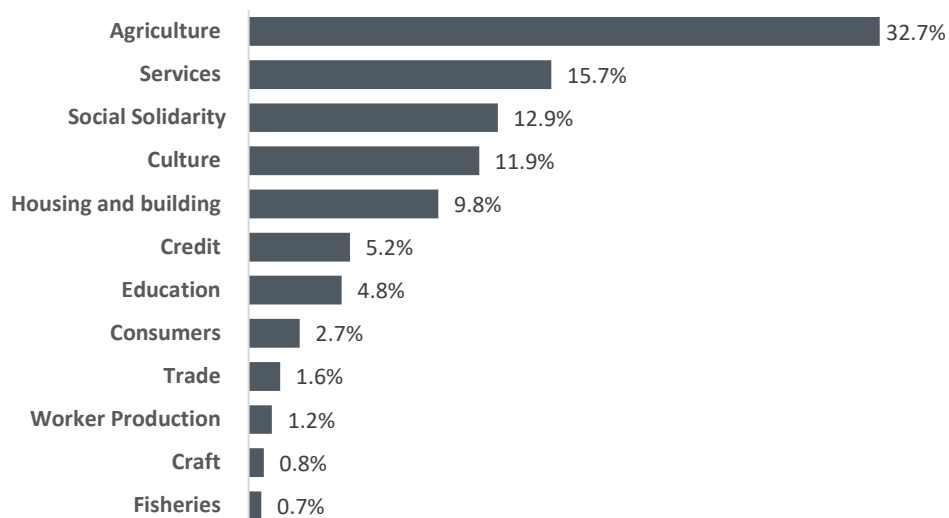


FIGURE 3 – Distribution of Cooperatives by their main Cooperative Branch, Accreditation Portal 2019

Still in the context of characterizing the entities that make up the Cooperative sector, some data from the 2018 Social Economy Sector Survey (SESS)<sup>5</sup> can be considered. Based on an initiative by Statistics Portugal, with the collaboration of CASES, this pioneering survey aimed to obtain information on different aspects of the management practices and the activity of Social Economy entities in Portugal, which included some complementary data to characterize the sector of Social Economy in general and the Cooperative sector in particular.

From this set of data, some of which are explored later, it is concluded that the majority of the sector is composed of micro-dimension<sup>6</sup> entities (Figure 4), and the sector's longevity is highlighted since more than 60% of the entities are 20 years old or more (Figure 5).

<sup>5</sup> Available at: <https://www.cases.pt/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ISES.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> SESS considered 3 dimension groups: (1) Micro entity (number of persons employed less than 10); (2) Small entity (number of persons employed equal to or greater than 10 and less than 50); (3) Medium and large entity (number of persons employed equal to or greater than 50).

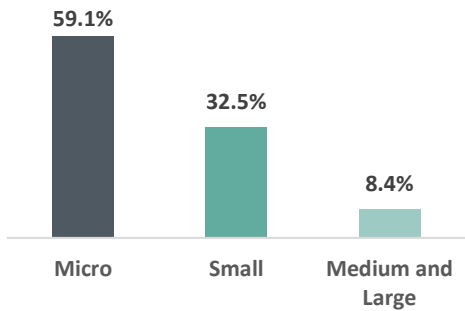


FIGURE 4 – Distribution of Cooperatives by dimension, SESS 2018

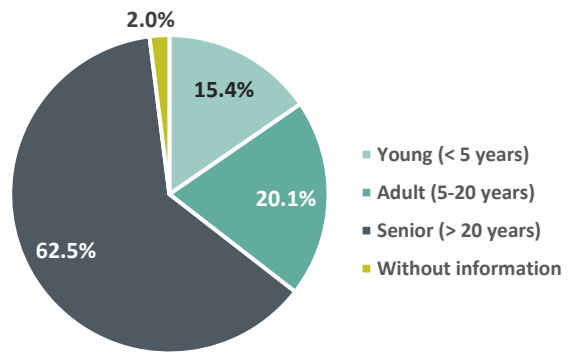


FIGURE 5 – Aggregation of Cooperative ages, SESS 2018

It is also worth mentioning the presence of Cooperatives in all geographic districts, about 36% of which revealed that the national level was the main area of geographical activity. However, the Local / Municipality level also proved to be very relevant (30.9%), revealing the proximity of the entities of this sector to the community in and for which they operate – Figure 6.

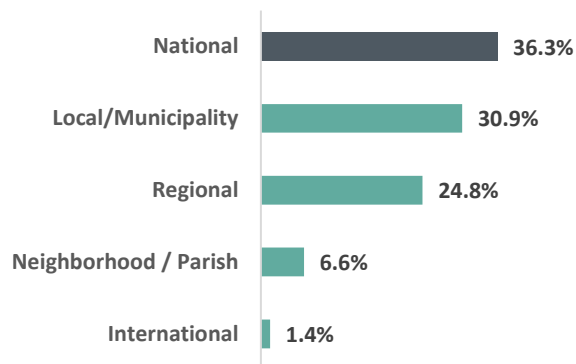


FIGURE 6 – Main geographical area in which Cooperatives developed their activity, SESS 2018

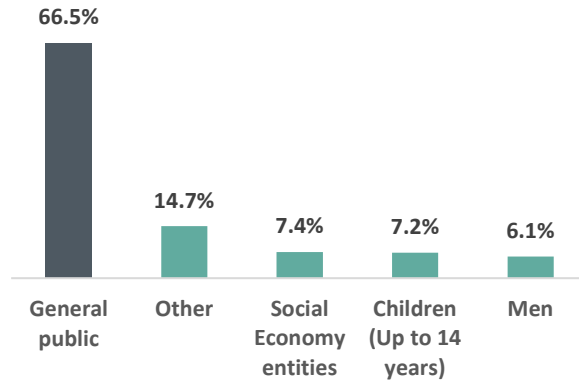


FIGURE 7 – 5 main users, beneficiaries or customers of Cooperatives, SESS 2018

Finally, it should be noted that in addition to being present throughout the country, the same survey also indicates that more than 66% of entities in the sector consider that their main users are the general public (Figure 7), being observed that more than half of the sector works in network, being the main partner of the Cooperative sector the sector itself, followed by the Business and the Public sectors – Figure 8.

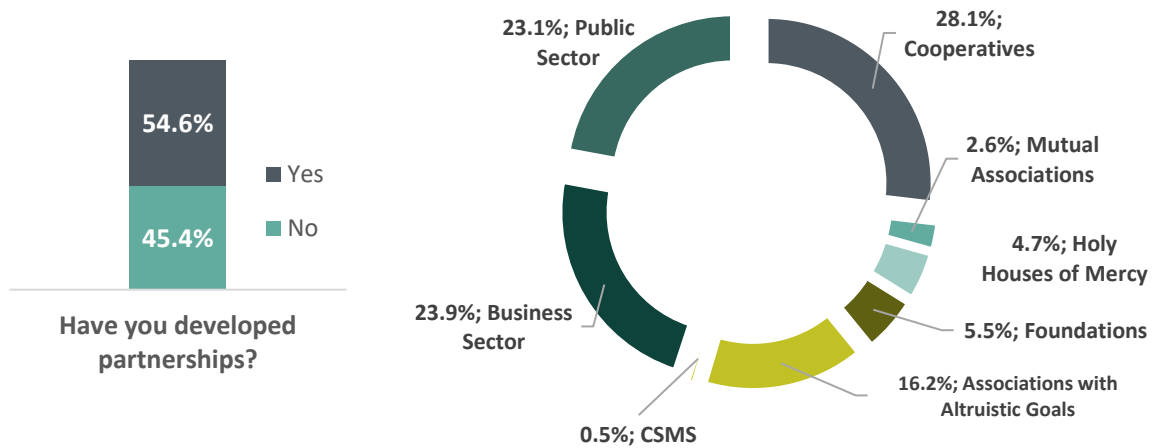


FIGURE 8 – Networking or partnership in Cooperatives, SESS 2018  
 Note: CSMS = Community and Self-Management Subsectors

3.

WOMEN IN THE COOPERATIVE SECTOR

In order to analyse the contribution of the Cooperative sector to gender equality, this report takes into account three spheres of female participation: in the cooperative movement; in the management of the cooperatives; and in the employment within these organizations.

3.1.

THE WOMEN COOPERATOR

According to data from the SESS of 2018, on average, each Portuguese is a member of two Social Economy entities, having been estimated approximately 20.5 million cooperators, associates or brothers, thus revealing a number of persons enrolled in Social Economy entities equivalent to twice the population residing in Portugal. This group includes about 828 thousand cooperators, which means that in 2018, 8 out of 100 Portuguese were members of a Cooperative.

Although this survey revealed nothing about the gender of the estimated cooperators, considering data from the CASES Cooperative Accreditation Portal, it is possible to estimate that about 40% of cooperators in Portugal are women – Figure 9.

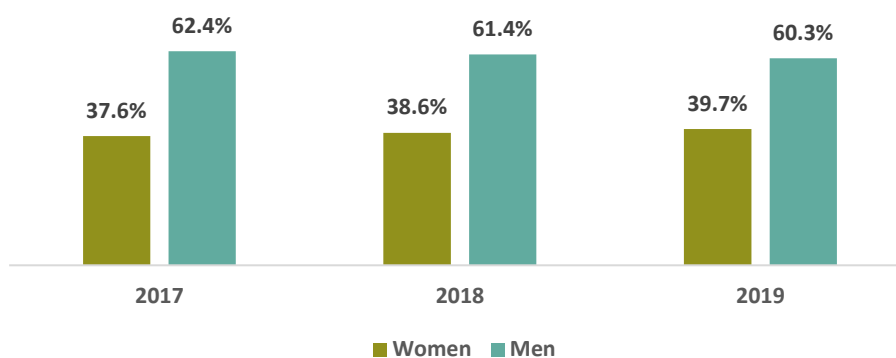


FIGURE 9 – Evolution of the gender distribution of Cooperatives individual Members, Accreditation Portal 2017-2019

The data considered in this field refers to an estimate that considers only the cooperators from the universe of Cooperatives registered on the Accreditation Portal. In addition, only the group of cooperators for whom gender was identified. In this sense, these data must be viewed with some reservations. Even so, it has the capacity to signal the dominant tendency of the cooperative movement in Portugal, that is, to be a predominantly masculine domain, although there is a slight tendency of increase in female representation.

3.2.

THE WOMEN MANAGER

In order to understand the leadership of Social Economy entities in general, and of Cooperatives in particular, the data collected by SESS regarding the hierarchical structure of Social Economy entities can be used. Two upper levels of management were considered, which included the members of **Top Management** (members of the executive body), that is, the governing body of the entity with executive functions; and the **Top Manager**, understood as the manager who occupies the highest hierarchical position without subordination to any other.

At the hierarchical level, employees who exercise some planning, organization, leadership and/or control function, that is, individuals who hold leadership or **Middle Management** positions (including sectionalists and/or monitors) were also considered.

Thus, in line with the aforementioned within the scope of the Cooperative movement, according to SESS, the leaders of Cooperatives also tend to be mostly male, noting that in 2018 only about 23% of Top Management positions were held by women and that only 19% of the Top Managers were female. Compared to the Social Economy sector, the female presence in these positions is lower in Cooperatives – Figure 10.

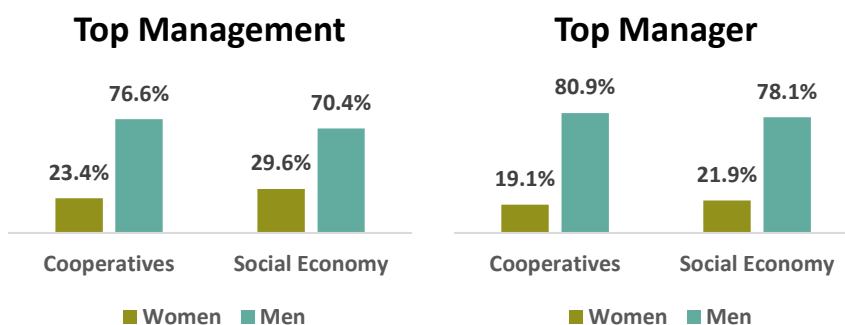


FIGURE 10 – Gender Distribution of Top Management and Top Managers of Cooperatives and Social Economy, SESS 2018

Although it is not possible to make a more detailed characterization of gender differences in the management of Social Economy entities, it should be noted that in Cooperatives, in addition to being mostly male, the top management and manager tend to:

- concentrate on the age group of **55 to 64 years old**, being that 57.3% of Top Managers are over 55 years old.
- **not having a degree or higher academic degree**, although there is higher education in the group of Top Managers - 49.2% have a higher academic level;
- have a **seniority of less than 9 years**, with a concentration of both the Top Management and Top Manager in the class of 1 to 4 years of seniority (about 28% in both cases);
- and the Top Managers not only exercise these functions mainly on a **voluntary** (63.5%) and a **non-exclusive basis** (74.2%), but also more than half of the Cooperatives (58.1%) indicated that they apply **time limits or a limited number of terms**.

It is also observed that 90.7% of Top Managers were **elected through the governing bodies**, and it is, therefore, relevant to also analyse the female participation in the decision making of the Cooperatives through the structure of their bodies, in particular the Administration body.

Thus, according to the most recent data from the Accreditation Portal, it is observed that in the set of Governing Bodies and in the various functions that comprise it, the male predominance remains. It should be noted that the rate of female participation in the Cooperative Administration Bodies was, in 2019, very close to that identified by SESS for the set of the Top Managers – Figure 11.

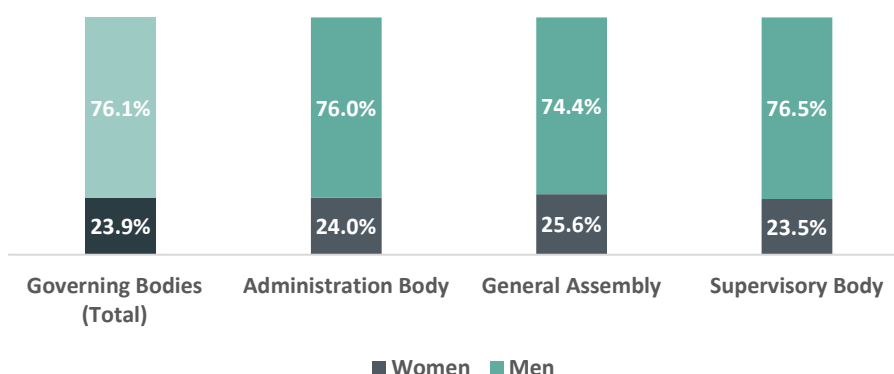


FIGURE 11 – Distribution of gender by different Governing Bodies, Accreditation Portal 2019

It should be noted that the gender distribution by the Administration Bodies (and by the different governing bodies) varies according to the Cooperative Branch, although only in two branches the female participation exceeds 50% - Social Solidarity and Crafts.

With regard to **Middle Management**, although men remain the majority, there is a greater gender parity, and it should be noted that in this context gender distribution in the Cooperative sector differs significantly from the one observed for the total of Social Economy entities where the vast majority are women – Figure 12.

However, it should be noted that female participation increases with the size of the Cooperative, so much so that larger Cooperatives have a female majority in Middle Management – Figure 13.

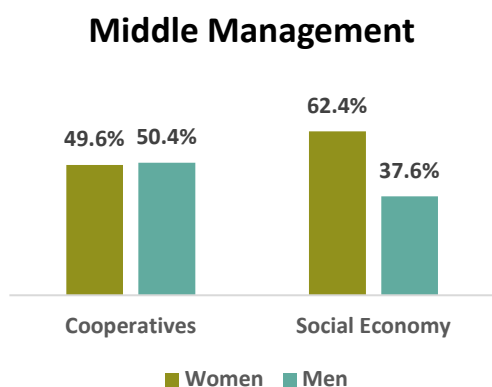


FIGURE 12 – Gender Distribution of Middle Management of Cooperatives and Social Economy, SESS 2018

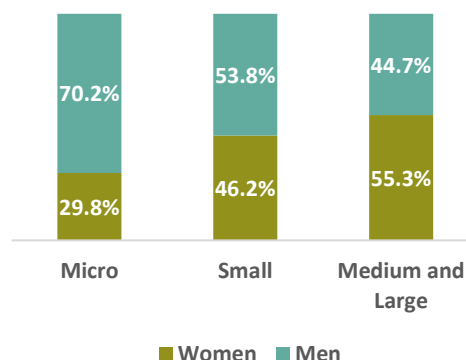


FIGURE 13 – Gender Distribution of Middle Management of Cooperatives by dimension, SESS 2018

### 3.3.

#### THE WOMEN EMPLOYEE

In 2018, the number of persons employed in the Cooperative Sector, according to SESS, represented 9.3% of the total number of workers in the Social Economy sector. Of this group of more than 25 thousand employees, more than half were women. This domain reveals itself to be predominantly female, which, although to a lesser extent, is in line with what is seen in the Social Economy as a whole and is higher than the proportion of employed female population in the National Economy in the same year – Figure 14.

WOMEN IN THE COOPERATIVE SECTOR

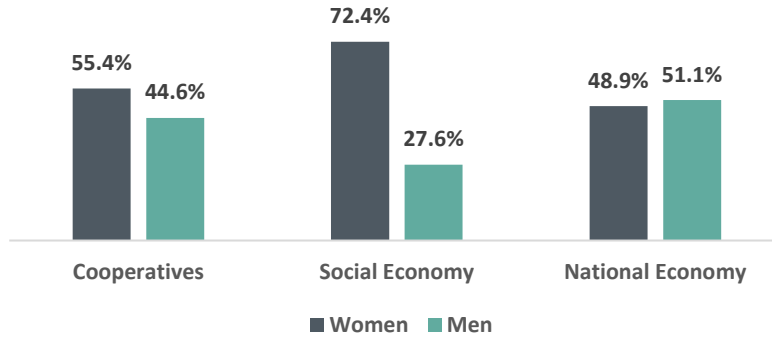


FIGURE 14 – Gender distribution of employees in Cooperatives, Social Economy and National Economy, SESS 2018

Considering the most recent data from the Accreditation Portal for 2019, not only does the proportion of women in the total of workers in Cooperatives reach a similar level to that observed by SESS in 2018 (55.4% vs 57.6%), as it becomes evident the segregation of gender by professional occupation, represented here by the Cooperative Branch – Figure 15.

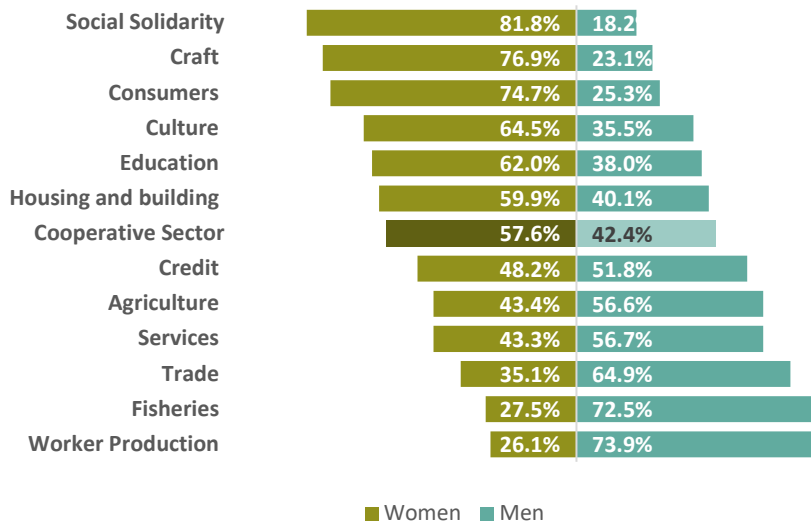


FIGURE 15 – Gender Distribution of Cooperatives employees by Cooperative Branch, Accreditation Portal 2019



In addition to the work performed by women in the Cooperatives on a paid basis, it is important to remember that this often occurs on a voluntary basis.

According to data from the Voluntary Work Survey (VWS), in 2018, 7.8% of working-age residents in Portugal did voluntary work, formal and informal, which represents about 695 thousand people. Of this group, more than half (55.0%) were women, being observed that the volunteer rate of women (8.1%) was higher than that of men (7.6%), either in a formal context (6, 5% vs. 6.4%), or in an informal context (1.7% vs. 1.3%).

Voluntary work is a fundamental resource for Social Economy entities, with the VWS estimating that, in 2018, approximately 516 thousand individuals have volunteered in social economy organizations, which represents more than 90% of formal voluntary work and more than 70 % of the total volunteers. Consequently, although the VWS does not indicate the percentage of women volunteers in the Social Economy sector, it is possible to admit that the volunteer rate follows a structure similar to that observed for the country, that is, mostly female.

In the Cooperative context, through the Accreditation Portal, it is possible to verify the existence of a greater number of women volunteering in these organizations than men, which is in accordance to what is concluded for the country and what is deduced for the Social Economy as a whole – Figure 16.

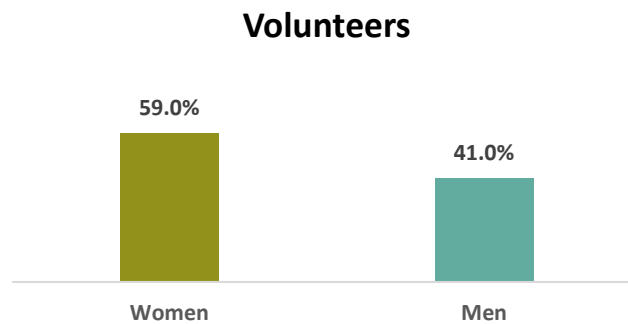


FIGURE 16 – Gender Distribution of Cooperatives volunteers, Accreditation Portal 2019

4.

COOPERATIVE SECTOR CONTRIBUTION TO SDG 5  
– GENDER EQUALITY

In September 2015, at the United Nations General Assembly, almost all countries in the world approved the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that define the priorities and aspirations of global sustainable development for 2030 and seek to mobilize efforts around 17 objectives, operationalized by 169 common goals and monitored by 230 indicators.

Among the 17 SDGs set by Agenda 2030, which provide for very varied actions, the importance and need of dedicating one of these objectives to gender equality was recognized, namely, SDG 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Thus, in particular, this objective aims to ensure the improvement of equality between men and women through the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence directed at women, access to universal sexual and reproductive health care, recognition of unpaid care and domestic work, and equal access to natural and economic resources and leadership at the political and labour levels.

The data collected in this report allows us to shed light on the contribution that the Cooperative Sector in Portugal currently has in this area, particularly in the scope of the inclusion of women in the labour market and in the scope of women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities regarding leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Considering that employees represent the largest share of human resources in most organizations, the data gathered in this report, similarly to what is also observed in the rest of the Social Economy sector, point to women being the majority in the Cooperative Sector. However, their **participation in decision-making** is still very uneven, both in terms of the cooperative movement, which is still largely dominated by men, but, above all, in terms of participation in the leadership of Cooperatives – Figure 17.

In fact, considering the different hierarchies within these organizations, all decision-making positions, especially the top positions, are performed mainly by men.

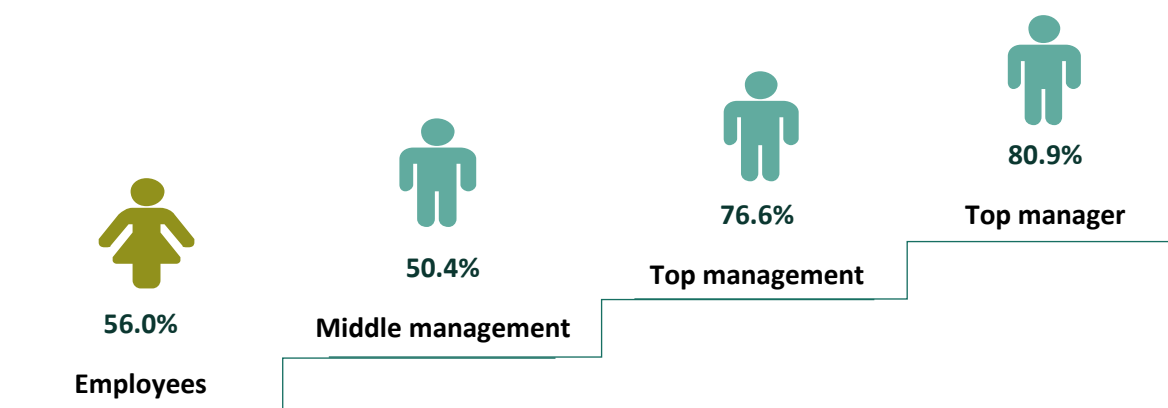


FIGURE 17 – Gender composition of the different hierarchical levels of the Cooperatives, SESS 2018

It is important to note, however, that the contribution of the Cooperative Sector to the **representation of women in leadership positions** proves to be greater than that associated with the Social Economy as a whole and, especially above the contribution of the National Economy. In particular, it is observed that in 2018, 7.8% of the female population employed in Cooperatives had middle management positions, which compares favourably with the figure of 6.9% identified in Social Economy and is well above the total proportion of the female population employed in Portugal with leadership positions in the same year - 2.3%<sup>7</sup>. To notice that the national value includes all leadership positions (middle and top), so that if it were possible to consider for Cooperatives also the top management positions the contribution of this sector to the SDG 5 would be even greater.

In addition, SESS made it possible to calculate that almost 17% of Cooperatives already adopt “quotas” policies to ensure a minimum threshold of representation by gender, a value, however, lower than that identified for all Social Economy entities – Figure 18.

<sup>7</sup> Value estimated by Statistics Portugal for 2018 with regards to the dissemination of the available indicators for Portugal concerning the global framework of indicators adopted by the United Nations to monitor the progress made in the scope of the Agenda's SDGs. It should be noted that this value has increased in 2019 to 2.7%. Available at: [https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine\\_publicacoes&PUBLICACOESpub\\_boui=332274994&PUBLICACOESmodo=2&xlang=en](https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_publicacoes&PUBLICACOESpub_boui=332274994&PUBLICACOESmodo=2&xlang=en)

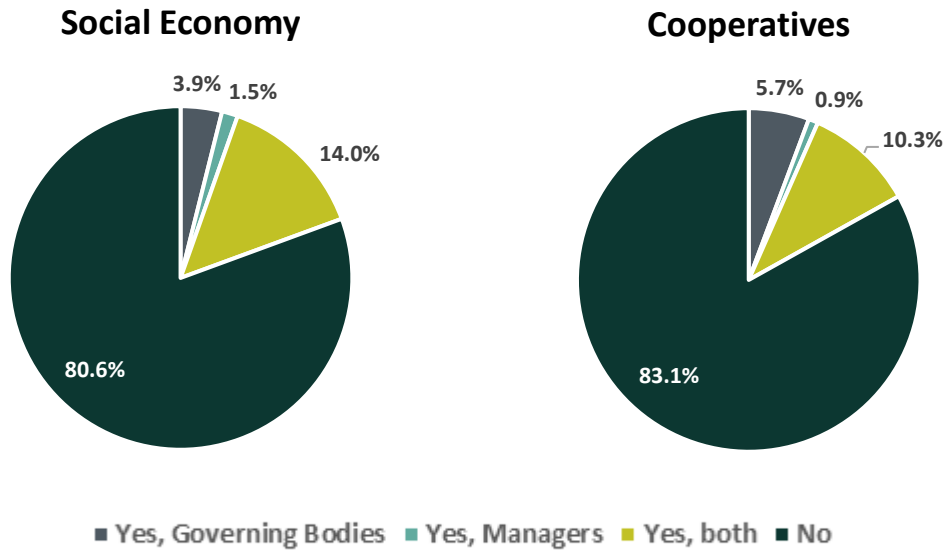


FIGURE 18 – Adoption of “quotas” to ensure a minimum representation threshold by gender, Social Economy and Cooperatives, SESS 2018

It is also important to analyse the **wage differences between men and women** in this sector. In 2018, the average hourly earnings in Cooperatives was around € 8, higher than that identified either in the Social Economy or in the National Economy. It is also observed the existence of a wage gap between men and women - in the Cooperative Sector women receive per hour € 1.4 less than men – Figure 19.



FIGURE 19 – Average hourly earnings (€ / hour) Total and by Gender, SESS 2018

Nonetheless, it should be stressed that not only is the average hourly earnings of women in the Cooperative sector greater than that observed in the rest of the economy, but the gross wage gap in the Cooperative Sector is smaller than that identified in the Social Economy and is very much in line with the one that was estimated for the National Economy in 2014 – Figure 20.

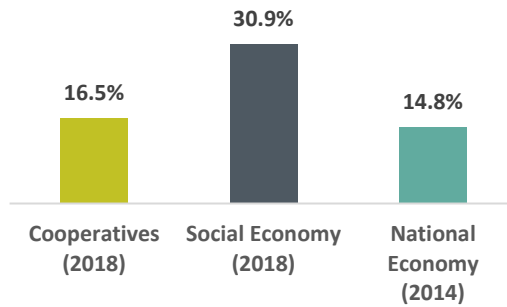


FIGURE 20 – Gross wage gap between men and women, SESS 2018

Despite these differences, more than 70% of Cooperatives, as well as the total entities in the Social Sector, adopt salary parity policies – Figure 21. Consequently, it is important to remember that salary differences are linked to certain factors of cultural, legal and socio-economic nature that go beyond the simple question of equal pay for equal work.

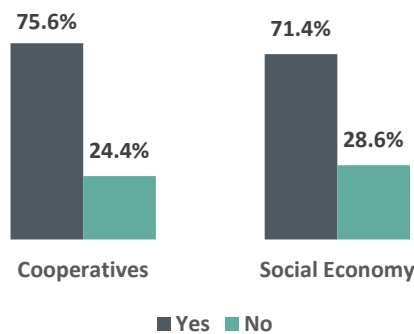


FIGURE 21 – Adoption of salary parity policies between men and women, SESS 2018

Part or even all of the wage gap between genders can be explained by the professional characteristics of women and men employed in Cooperatives (for example, education level, professional experience or position occupied) and by gender segregation in the sectorial and occupational spheres, that is, there is a greater concentration of women in certain sectors/professions where, on average, remunerations are lower compared to other sectors/professions.

In fact, considering the data presented in **section 3.3** on gender distribution by the different Cooperative Branches, it is possible to identify a clear segregation in this area, where effectively women seem to be concentrated in Cooperative Branches that include activities where typically lower wages are earned. For example, the Social Solidarity Branch, which mainly includes human health and social support activities, in 2018 had an average monthly base remuneration 8.1% lower than the national average.

On the other hand, it should also be noted that it is in the larger Cooperatives that there is a greater number of women with functions of middle management, being in these organizations that the average remuneration is also higher – Figure 22.

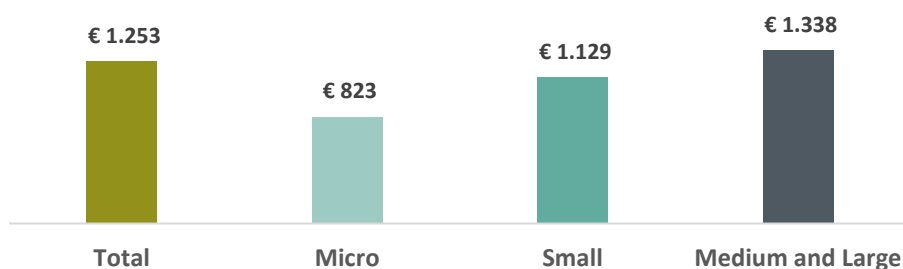


FIGURE 22 – Gross monthly remuneration per employee by size and total, SESS 2018

Finally, in the field of gender equality, another important dimension that must be analysed concerns the recognition and valuation of unpaid assistance and domestic work, in particular the importance of promoting shared responsibility in the management of the home and family that continues to be attributed disproportionately more to women than to men.

Although it is not easy to gather information that allows studying these dimensions in detail, an important aspect to consider in the organizational scope may be the adoption of practices related to the reconciliation of professional and family life. The implementation of measures of this nature, not only represent factors of competitiveness, but can also be fundamental elements for a more balanced management, without negative or discriminatory repercussions, of the various spheres where workers intervene, in particular women.

In fact, given that gender inequalities cause women to have a higher unpaid workload than men, with consequent differentiation of opportunities, conciliation practices mainly affect this group. However, these measures must seek to simultaneously aim to promote the more active participation of men in family life.

The possibility of spending less time performing unpaid tasks or being able to do them without penalty in the workplace, thus appears as a way to combat unequal opportunities for progression at work, promote a more equitable distribution of domestic work and increase participation of women in other economic and social spheres.

Therefore, in this domain, it is positively seen that about 48% of the Cooperatives already adopt this type of measures, in particular flexibility of schedules – Figure 23. However, this figure is still below the one observed in the Social Economy Sector - 57.7 %.

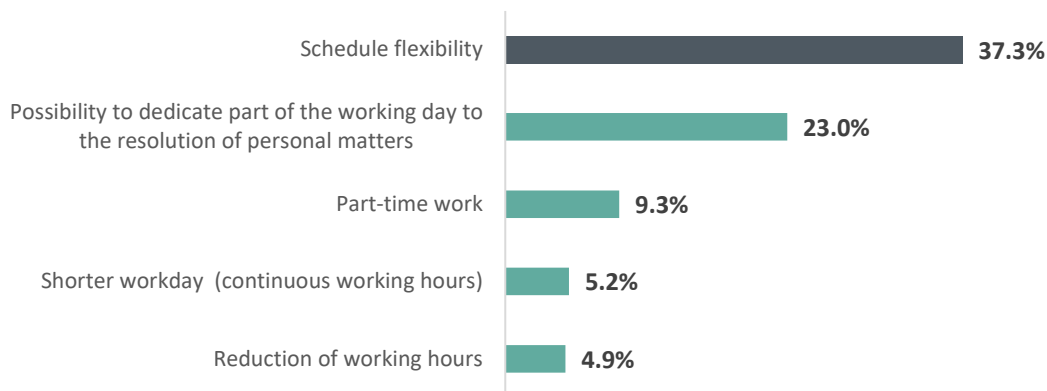


FIGURE 23 – 5 main measures adopted by Cooperatives to reconcile professional and personal life, SESS 2018

## 5.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

In Portugal, there are already several national plans for Gender Equality, Citizenship and Non-discrimination, which are in line with the international commitments assumed by Portugal, with highlights for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030 - Portugal + Igual.

However, compliance with the set of SDGs in general, and the SDG 5 in particular, requires action on a global scale, not only from governments, but also from civil society and companies, and for the latter provide an opportunity to improve actions and existing strategies and implement new actions and projects aiming to contribute to national and global goals.

In this sense, as a driver of economic growth, employment and, in particular, as a disseminator and enhancer of cooperation, citizenship, entrepreneurship and democratic participation, placing people and their realization as such at the centre of action, the Cooperative Sector has a critical role to play and a self-interest in contributing to achieving the SDGs and contributing to the fight against gender-based discrimination.

The data presented above shows that in terms of participation in the Cooperative movement, remuneration issues and, above all, in the female representation in top management positions, there are still notorious inequalities between men and women in the Cooperative Sector.

Nevertheless, the contribution that this sector has to the inclusion of women in the labour market in Portugal is undeniable, where it proves to be more equitable than the Social Economy sector as a whole. Also, in terms of women's participation in decision-making at an intermediate level, the contribution of the Cooperative Sector proves to be greater than that coming from the rest of the Economy. Even in terms of remuneration, it should be noted that the inequalities between men and women are lower than those observed in the Social Economy and are in line with the rest of the Economy.

It should also be noted that, considering the existence of time limits on the mandates of the Cooperatives top managers, and a concentration of their leaders in higher age groups, in the short to medium term many of these organizations will have to renew their leaders. This creates the opportunity to prepare this renewal by investing in greater female representation, which, in turn, may also bring benefits to the reduction of the salary gap and to a greater female adhesion to the cooperative movement, which, should be mentioned, already shows signs of growth.

Thus, although gender equality, in opportunities, rights and responsibilities, is a much denser and more complex topic than it is possible to capture from the data mentioned above, this



information provides reasons to celebrate the rights that women have conquered so far and point out opportunities for introducing the change in behaviours and standards that are necessary for a true gender equality within the Cooperative Sector, in particular, and in society, in general.

Finally, CASES remember that the quantity and quality of information required for reports such as this depends on the availability of information. In this regard, CASES would like to express its thanks to Statistics Portugal that proposed in 2018 the realization of SESS, without which the gender reality in the Social Economy Sector and, in particular, in the Cooperative sector, would not be so well illustrated now. It is also important to highlight all the Cooperatives that, when submitting mandatory communication acts, filled, often voluntarily, the various fields of sociodemographic information.

## METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

### SESS – Social Economy Sector Survey

The Social Economy Sector Survey (SESS) followed the launch of the Management Practices Survey (IPG), in 2017, and the study carried out in 2018, in which the information collected at IPG was cross-referenced with the information provided by the same entities in other sources of information, such as: IES (Simplified Business Information), the Relatório Único (Personnel Tables) and the Survey on the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Businesses (IUTICE).

The survey was target at members of the top management of the entities, aiming to characterize the Social Economy sector, in three main modules:

- A. Characterization of the entity - this module sought to obtain information to characterize the entities, for example with regard to their area of intervention, organic structure, relations with other entities and human resources;
- B. Management practices of the entity - this module included issues related to management practices, namely with regard to the entity's strategy, performance monitoring, use of information technologies, means of financing and their management and social responsibility systems;
- C. Information about the top management member responsible for the information.

Within the scope of this project, Cooperatives, Mutualist Associations, Holy Houses of Mercy and Foundations were exhaustively surveyed. For the family of Associations with altruistic goals, a sample stratified by the level 3 of the International Classification of Non-Profit and Third Sector Organizations (ICNP/TSO level 3 - V04077) and by entity size was selected. The classification of companies by size, for the purposes of stratification, obeys the definition contained in the Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003, in its article 2, with only the variables persons employed and turnover being considered. In the Social Economy family Community and Self-Management Subsectors (CSMS), only representative organizations or aggregators of this type of entities were surveyed, namely "Federations, Secretariats and Associations". For methodological reasons, the CSMS family was not analysed, given that only the aggregating organizations of this type of entities were surveyed, and are not representative of this family.

SESS did not consider the Universe of the Social Economy Satellite Account (SESA) 2016, but the institutions that had an evident sign of activity in 2018. The survey was carried out between June 17 and September 18, 2019, having the year 2018 as the data reference period. This was

launched with a sample of 6 019 Social Economy entities, and 3 550 valid responses were considered in this study (59.0% of the sample). By family, the Cooperatives had a response rate of 60.8%. For the Families that were exhaustively inquired, treatment of non-responses was made, through imputation based on the stratum that the entities were in, namely the Social Economy family, area of intervention and dimension. For Associations with altruistic goals, the results were extrapolated, based on the number of entities in each stratum, being representative of the total of this family. The number of imputed responses totalled 789 in the Cooperatives.

#### CSES Accreditation Portal

In operation since June 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, CSES Accreditation Portal is a digital platform for receiving information regarding mandatory communication acts, as defined by Art. 116 of the Portuguese Cooperative Code<sup>8</sup>, contributing to the dematerialization of the information sent by Cooperatives and the efficiency of its treatment. At the same time, this Portal allows to streamline the process of requesting, validating and issuing the Cooperative Credential, a document proving the legal constitution and regular functioning of the Cooperative.

As a consequence, in the fulfilment of the objectives described above, the Accreditation Portal also allows the collection of statistical information on the Cooperative Sector, making it possible to obtain sociodemographic information of different kinds, including the gender dimension.

However, it is important to note that this Portal is intended exclusively for Mainland Cooperatives<sup>9</sup>, and in this sense, the information extracted from the Portal is not exhaustive, being, by inference, underestimated. Still, it is possible to estimate with data from SESA and SESS that the Accreditation Portal represents between 60% to 70% of the Portuguese Cooperative Sector.

Finally, it should be noted that the filling and quality of information on the Accreditation Portal is the sole responsibility of the Cooperatives that register there.

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<sup>8</sup> Available at (only in Portuguese): <https://dre.pt/web/guest/legislacao-consolidada/-/lc/view?cid=107981176>

<sup>9</sup> Cooperatives of the Autonomous Region of Azores must send their information to the DRCI (Direção Regional do Comércio e Indústria) and the Cooperatives of the Autonomous Region of Madeira must send their information to IEM (Instituto do Emprego da Madeira).

# WOMEN IN THE COOPERATIVE SECTOR