



Development and socioeconomic environment of cooperatives in Slovenia



Franci Avsec^{a,*}, Jernej Štromajer^b

^a *Zadružna zveza Slovenije (Cooperative Union of Slovenia), Miklošičeva 4, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia*

^b *Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia*

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Cooperatives
Slovenia
Social entrepreneurship

ABSTRACT

The financial and economic crisis as well as increasing awareness about cooperatives on the European and global level awoke interest in cooperatives and similar business models in Slovenia. Several initiatives for establishing new cooperatives have emerged in recent years. The paper analyses the recent developments of cooperatives in traditional (e.g. farmers' cooperatives) and new sectors (e.g. media, worker, local food supply, energy and housing cooperatives) through the use of a short historical survey, available statistical data and relevant changes in public policy towards cooperatives in Slovenia.

© 2015 Published by Elsevier Ltd.

1. Introduction

The aim of this contribution is a brief analysis of cooperatives and their socioeconomic environment in Slovenia to provide a general survey of this phenomenon as a whole and to offer deeper insight into some (but not all) sectors, where cooperatives have either been active already for many years or have been emerging only recently.

The history offers a lot of good and bad examples, from which one can learn for the future, but it has also left us attitudes and stereotypes that may persist for many years. As we would like to indicate these cultural and historical factors as well, a brief historical survey of the cooperative movement in Slovenia is given at the beginning.

The present state and the economic importance of cooperatives in the economy as a whole and in some characteristic sectors are analysed on the basis of available statistical data, gathered by the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (AJPES), which manages the Slovenian Business Register as the central public database of all business entities and also publishes their annual reports.

The development of cooperatives is further analysed based on the overall economic development, public opinion and public

policy towards cooperatives since 1991, when Slovenia gained its independence.

The development of cooperatives is influenced by sector policies as well. Therefore, the paper also contains information on cooperatives in some sectors in which cooperatives have reached a mature phase as well as in those where they have been rediscovered.

The analysis concludes with a few final remarks that attempt to draw some experience gathered during former periods and from the present time.

2. A brief historical periodisation

Cooperatives in Slovenia have a long history, stretching back to the 19th century and marked by several ups and downs, interruptions and discontinuities, mostly due to changes of socioeconomic systems and the changing political demarcation of the territory during the last century and a half. Following this criterium, the historical development of cooperatives on the territory of what is now Slovenia could be roughly divided into four periods.

The first period starts in the middle of the 19th century, when credit and later also other cooperatives (like supply and marketing cooperatives of farmers and artisans, consumer cooperatives of workers and civil servants, productive and housing cooperatives of workers) emerged. In its first years, the movement had a strong national character, as cooperatives were considered by the patriotic intelligentsia, like brothers Josip (1834–1914) and Mihael

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +386 41337218; fax: +386 2441370.

E-mail addresses: Franci.Avsec@siol.net (F. Avsec), Jernej.Stromajer@gmail.com (J. Štromajer).

Table 1

The development of credit cooperatives affiliated to the first Slovenian cooperative union from 1884 to 1894.

Year	Credit cooperatives	Members	Shares ^a	Savings collected ^a	Volume of credits ^a
1884	21	7536	197,160	1,365,747	1,591,746
1894	72	36,403	618,055	8,536,131	8,565,292

Source: Schauer, 1945, p. 124 and 126.

^a Austro-Hungarian guildens.

Vošnjak (1837–1920), an appropriate institutional form for gradual economic emancipation of the Slovenian nation.

In 1873, Austria legislatively regulated cooperatives as a special type of legal person with the Act on Cooperatives (Postava z dne 7. aprila 1873 od pridobilnih in gospodarstvenih društvih ali tovarištvih). This act (still valid in Austria with several subsequent amendments, Gesetz vom 9. April 1873, über Erwerbs- und Wirtschafts-genossenschaften) is based on a liberal conception of cooperatives. Thirty years later, in 1903, it was complemented by another Act prescribing the obligatory audit of all cooperatives, in principle by their unions (Zakon z dne 10. maja 1903 o pregledu pridobitnih in gospodarskih zadrug ter drugih društev).

At the initiative of Mihael Vošnjak, the first Slovenian cooperative union was founded in Celje on 18 January 1883. The union promoted the establishment of new credit cooperatives and also helped affiliated cooperatives with voluntary auditing (twenty years before the obligatory auditing of cooperatives was introduced by the Act from 1903). In the period from 1884 to 1894, the number of credit cooperatives affiliated to the union more than tripled, while their membership base and volume of activity expanded even more, as shown in Table 1.

In the second phase of this period, under the influence of the Christian social movement led by Dr. Janez Ev. Krek (1865–1917), smaller but more numerous credit cooperatives according to the Raiffeisen model became a mass movement.

Krek planned the development of cooperatives in three stages. The first stage was the establishment of credit cooperatives that were really successful in providing members with access to credit due to their small, easily surveyable business territory, where members knew each other and were therefore willing to be jointly and severally liable for the cooperative. Business was done in the domestic Slovene language and the work of functionaries was unpaid. The second stage in this plan was the development of other types of cooperatives, especially marketing and supply cooperatives that would protect farmers from the market unbalances. These cooperatives emerged later, being less numerous and less successful than those in the credit sector, as they required market oriented production and more skilful management. The final stage in Krek's vision of cooperative development involved cooperatives as self-managed professional organisations of peasantry, but this stage presupposed political reforms and never became a reality.

Nevertheless, the cooperative movement developed at astonishing speed: the Cooperative union in Ljubljana, where Krek was first a member and later the president of the board, increased its membership from 90 cooperatives to 575 twelve years later, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Cooperatives affiliated with Cooperative union in Ljubljana, in 1900, 1901 and 1912.

Year	Credit cooperatives		All cooperatives	
	Number	Membership	Number	Membership
1900	58	n.a.	90	n.a.
1901	104	27,309	157	38,685
1912	405	115,114	575	137,444

Source: Lukan (1989), p. 86.

Table 3

Number of cooperatives on Slovenian territory (within the Yugoslav state) at the end of 1918, 1930 and 1937.

Year	1918	1930	1937
Credit cooperatives	416	507	539
All cooperatives	730	1209	1677

Source: Valenčič (1939), p. 459.

The second period began in 1918 with the emergence of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, which was united with the Kingdom of Serbia and became the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the same year. It was later (in 1929) renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This period lasted from the end of the First until the end of the Second World War. The first years of this period saw the consolidation of the cooperative movement with the newly established cooperative banks and apex organisations on the state level. Cooperative law in the entire state was unified in 1937 by the Act on Economic Cooperatives (Zakon o gospodarskih zadrugah, 1937), which introduced a more socially oriented concept of cooperatives with indivisible reserves, limited remuneration on shares and prevalent, if not exclusive, business with members. The economic crisis in 1930 seriously affected farmers. Therefore, the government provided for reduction of farmers' debts to financial institutions, including credit cooperatives, which transferred a part of their corresponding claims to the Privileged Agrarian Bank, while the rest of the claim had to be written off (Maček, 1989, p. 437). During the whole period between the world wars, the number of cooperatives increased and cooperatives also emerged in new sectors (for instance, electricity and water-supply cooperatives) (Table 3).

After the Second World War and the radical change of the socioeconomic system in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, a collectivistic conception of cooperatives as "organisations of the working people" was enforced. Credit cooperatives in Slovenia, as the backbone of the former system, were wound up and their property was nationalised. In the first years after the war, newly established cooperatives played a large role in the renovation of the country and providing supplies for it. However, the policy soon focused on cooperatives as a tool for socialisation of small producers in agriculture and craft. The political campaign for setting up so called agricultural working cooperatives (1948–1953) according to the Soviet example and according to a special Act (Temeljni, 1949) failed; these cooperatives were wound up, while the land and other assets were returned to farmers. Thus, the major part of agricultural land and forests remained in private ownership. However, the administrative pressure brought a long lasting, bad image of cooperatives among the rural population (Mioković & Šljukić, 2012). This failure was one of the main political motives for the replacement of state and cooperative ownership with social ownership and the self-management system in 1953 through the Federal Constitutional Act (Ustavni, 1953).

The self-management system improved the autonomy of economic organisations, widened the participation of employees, farmers and other working people on the decision making process and gradually introduced several elements of a market economy.

The Regulation regarding agricultural cooperatives from 1954 (Uredba, 1954) defined the property of a cooperative as "social ownership" that "should not in any case be taken from the cooperative" (Art. 11), while the idea of self-management was close to traditional governance of cooperatives. These steps towards economic liberalisation enabled rather strong development of multipurpose agricultural cooperatives that provided farmer members with various services: inputs supply, marketing of agricultural products and rendering other services (for instance, with agricultural machinery, etc.).

Table 4

Agricultural cooperatives and their members in Slovenia in 1955, 1960, 1965 and 1970.

Year	1955	1960	1965	1970
Agricultural cooperatives	714	421	82	63
Members	n. a.	125,328	48,713	38,461

Source: SURS (1964), p. 137; SURS (1971), p. 45 and 151.

Towards the end of the 1950s, economic policy began to prefer big agricultural enterprises over agricultural cooperatives. Frequent amendments of cooperative legislation prompted the gradual equalisation of cooperatives with social enterprises and the predominating governance role of employees over members. The general meeting of members was gradually losing its central position in the governance of a cooperative, and the main issues were decided by cooperative councils consisting of the elected representatives of members and workers. The number of agricultural cooperatives fell drastically at the beginning of the 1960s due to massive mergers of cooperatives among themselves and even with social enterprises, while the cooperative unions had to cease their activities as independent legal entities for a decade (1962–1972). Since cooperatives in many cases merged with agricultural enterprises, farmers began to cooperate with these enterprises as external suppliers termed “co-operators”. Parallel with the conceptual development towards social ownership as “non-ownership”, cooperatives lost their governance and property rights to processing and other enterprises founded by them (Table 4).

The last subperiod was the time of the so called system of associated labour, when state policy took a more favourable attitude towards private farmers and their cooperatives. According to the first Slovenian Act that regulated cooperatives and other associations of farmers (*Zakon o združevanju kmetov, 1972*), the Cooperative Union of Slovenia was re-established in 1972.

Complex organisational solutions tried to balance the interests of members and employees of cooperatives within the social ownership model. Thus, for instance, the basic organisations were organised within the enterprises as well as cooperatives to guarantee more direct influence of “associated workers” and/or “associated farmers” on the decision-making process. The new provisions laid down the principle of equal governance rights of associated farmers and workers and gave associated farmers a decisive role if their investments in the social assets were at issue. The position of farmers cooperating with enterprises was also improved, since they could, alone or together with workers of the corresponding part of the enterprise, organise a so called basic organisation of co-operators, which resembled a cooperative with the only difference being that it existed within an enterprise. Basic organisations of co-operators were organised mostly by farmers within agricultural and forestry enterprises, and, in much smaller numbers, by craftsmen or tradespersons as ‘co-operators’ of industrial enterprises.

The business between the associated farmers and their organisations was stimulated by a wide range of subsidies and tax alleviations. The agricultural policy also subsidised the advisory service in agricultural cooperatives. All these measures supported a fast process of modernisation of private farms with farm machinery and new or adapted objects for basic or complementary activities, although the constitutional limitation for private ownership of the land (land maximum) was not abolished until 1991.

The economic policy also supported craft and housing cooperatives, so their number increased during this period (Table 5).

Table 5

Cooperatives and organisations of co-operators within the period of the so called “associated labour” in Slovenia.

Institutional form/Year	1975	1980	1985	1990
Agricultural cooperatives (AC)	54	42	41	46
Craft cooperatives	n. a.	35	45	100
Other (e.g., housing) cooperatives	n. a.	61	94	111
Basic organisations of co-operators (BOC)	n.a.	86	87	70
Associated farmers in AC and BOC	n.a.	45,407	69,009	n.a.

Source: SURS (1976), p. 198; SURS (1981), p. 60; SURS (1986), p. 65; SURS (1991), p. 64.

Throughout this period, farmers’ supply and marketing cooperatives gradually achieved major economic importance, while cooperatives in other sectors, except in craft and housing, almost vanished.

The last, present period of development is described in more detail in the following sections (Table 6).

3. Legislative framework, public opinion and public policy towards cooperatives after 1991

3.1. Legislation

Towards the end of the 1980s, when Yugoslavia found itself in a deep economic and political crisis, discussions about the necessary economic changes also addressed the issue of plurality of ownership forms with a wider space for development of cooperatives and private enterprises. The Federal Act on Enterprises (*Zakon o podjetjih, 1988*) abandoned the institutional system of associated labour with basic organisations, emphasising enterprises as profit oriented economic units in a market environment. Two years later, the Federal Act on Cooperatives (*Zakon o zadrugah, 1990*) was passed. According to these acts, an enterprise or a cooperative might use assets in social, cooperative and/or private ownership. Many organisations of co-operators transformed themselves into agricultural or craft cooperatives due to the legislative changes. After the first steps towards privatisation had already been made by the Yugoslavian legislation, the final decision about the transformation of social enterprises either into joint-stock or limited liability companies and their privatisation by a combination of gratuitous and onerous methods was adopted through the Slovenian Act on Ownership Transformation of Enterprises (*Zakon o lastninskem preoblikovanju podjetij, 1992*).

Slovenia gained its independence in 1991. The Constitution (*Ustava, 1991*) defines the republic as a social state based on the rule of law, guaranteeing political, economic and social rights and emphasising the economic, social and ecological function of property. But it does not expressly mention cooperatives, speaking about economic organisations only generally.

The Act on Cooperatives of 1992 (*Zakon o zadrugah, 1992*) defines a cooperative as an organisation of an unlimited number of members that has a specific purpose to promote the economic interests and economic or social activities of the members through business transactions between members and the cooperative. The Act is conceived as general legislation referring to all cooperatives regardless of their activity and the status of their members (producers or consumers), leaving a lot of room for internal autonomy of a cooperative.

The Denationalisation Act (*Zakon o denacionalizaciji, 1991*) of 1991 provided for the restitution of property that had been nationalised to individuals and religious communities. The Act on Economic Cooperatives from 1937 provided that if a cooperative was wound up, after the creditors had been paid and the nominal amount of members’ shares had been repaid, the remaining

Table 6

The historical periodisation of the cooperative movement in Slovenia.

Time period	Political system	Main legislation	Conception and role of cooperatives	Foreign examples
1856 (the first Slovenian cooperative in Ljubljana is founded) -1918	Austrian Empire, Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (from 27 December 1867)	(Austrian) Act on Cooperatives (1873), Act on Auditing of Cooperatives (1903) Hungarian Commercial Code (1875) for the northeastern part of the Slovenian territory – Prekmurje	Liberal conception of cooperatives as a tool for economic emancipation of the nation (patriotic intelligentsia, Josip and Mihael Vošnjak), later, a more socially oriented cooperative movement (e.g. J. Ev. Krek).	Ideas of Hermann Schulze Delitzsch and Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen, indirectly (via Czech examples) and directly
1918–1945	State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (29 October 1918) Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1 December 1918) Kingdom Yugoslavia (3 October 1929)	Act on Economic Cooperatives (1937)	Consolidation of the movement (cooperative banks as apex financial institutions of credit cooperatives). Legislative unification emphasised a more socially oriented cooperative model with, in principle, indivisible reserves.	Cooperative movements and legislation in Austria, Germany and France (indivisible reserves)
1945–1991	Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (10 August 1944), Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (29 November 1946) Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (7 April 1963)	(Federal) General Act on Cooperatives (1946) (Federal) Basic Act on Agricultural Cooperatives (1948) (Federal) Regulation regarding Agricultural Cooperatives (1954) (Federal) Basic Act on Agricultural Cooperatives (1965) (Slovenian) Act on Associating of Farmers (1972) (Federal) Basic Act on Associated Labour (1976) (Slovenian) Act on Associating of Farmers (1979) (Federal) Act on Cooperatives (1990)	(1) Subperiod of administrative socialism (1945–1953): renovation and supply cooperatives, failing campaign for agricultural working cooperatives. (2) First subperiod of self-management system (1953–1962): liberalisation of the cooperative movement. (3) Second subperiod of the self-management system (1962–1969): equalising of cooperatives with social enterprises. (4) Third subperiod of the self-management system: (1969–1990).	Soviet Union examples until 1948, later no explicit foreign influence until 1990 when cooperative ownership is reintroduced
1991–	Republic Slovenia after independence (25 June 1991)	Act on Cooperatives (1992), Regulation 1435/2003/EC for a Statute of European Cooperative Society (2003) with corresponding amendments of the Act on Cooperatives (2009)	Cooperatives as organisations of members as users or workers, transition to the market economy with privatisation and restitution of nationalised property with special provisions for cooperatives, social entrepreneurship, new cooperative initiatives	German and Austrian legislation (served as a model for legislation regarding commercial companies as well), International Cooperative Alliance (definition, values and principles of cooperatives, 1995), European Union (Regulation 1435/2003/EC on SCE), Mondragon cooperative system (from the Basque country, Spain), social, worker and consumer cooperatives from Italy, etc.

surplus was to be transferred to the cooperative union, which was obliged to assign such funds to another cooperative in the same sector and territory or, otherwise, to use the funds for the promotion of cooperatives. The Act on Cooperatives from 1992 extended the entitlement to restitution for nationalised property to cooperatives and their unions as well (the latter being entitled also in cases where the cooperative, the property of which had been nationalised, no longer existed and had no legal successor).

In addition, the Act on Cooperatives provided that at most 45% of the social capital in 45 enterprises listed in the Annex to the Act and active in the food processing industry was to be assigned to cooperatives that collaborated with these enterprises. Although the Act allowed enterprises not mentioned in the Annex to opt for such a method of ownership transformation as well, no enterprise voluntarily chose this privatisation method so that the measure concerned only the already established farmers' cooperatives and did not incite cooperatives in other sectors.

3.2. Basic statistics

From a general point of view, cooperatives present a minority in the Slovenian entrepreneurial landscape, as they are far less numerous and generally have less economic weight than other economic players, among which commercial companies and individual entrepreneurs prevail. The total number of cooperatives represents only 0.5% of the total number of commercial companies, as shown in Table 7.

The statistics in the latest annual reports submitted for 2013 by commercial companies and cooperatives reveal that cooperatives, if classified by their main activity, are most important in trade, agriculture and real estate (housing). In 2013, farmers' cooperatives, which are voluntary members of the Cooperative Union of Slovenia, accounted for approximately 84% of the total turnover and 82% of the total number of employees in all cooperatives in Slovenia (AJ PES, 2014; Zadrúžna zveza Slovenije, 2014) (Table 8).

Table 7
Registered cooperatives, commercial companies and individual entrepreneurs in Slovenia as of 31 December 2014.

Sector of activity	Cooperatives	Commercial companies	Individual entrepreneurs
A – Agriculture, forestry and fishing	85	464	829
B – Mining and quarrying	2	77	30
C – Manufacturing	34	8254	9299
D – Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	2	725	398
E – Water supply; sewerage; waste management and remediation activities	12	370	120
F – Construction	20	9453	11,363
G – Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	100	16,499	11,289
H – Transport and storage	7	3369	5350
I – Accommodation and food service activities	3	3462	5569
J – Information and communication	5	3624	4021
K – Financial and insurance activities	2	1387	1026
L – Real estate activities	49	2210	712
M – Professional, scientific and technical activities	29	14,086	13,632
N – Administrative and support service activities	6	2241	3623
O – Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	4	10	38
P – Education	2	743	2552
Q – Human health and social work activities	7	1124	1508
R – Arts, entertainment and recreation	2	714	2572
S – Other service activities	6	1007	5787
Total	377	69,819	79,718

Source: [AJPES \(2015\)](#).

Table 8
Some financial indicators from the annual reports of all cooperatives in Slovenia for the financial year 2013.

Sector of activity	Number	Average number of employees	Total turnover (000 EUR)	Net added value (000 EUR)
A – Agriculture, forestry and fishing	76	411	104,155	10,552
C – Manufacturing	27	236	32,920	5942
D – Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	2	0	0	–2
E – Water supply; sewerage; waste management and remediation activities	10	0	181	52
F – Construction	13	15	6046	752
G – Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	92	2428	652,469	57,897
H – Transport and storage	4	12	3226	265
I – Accommodation and food service activities	4	0	180	57
J – Information and communication	5	0	150	–7
K – Financial and insurance activities	2	0	8	–5
L – Real estate activities	34	56	3806	2063
M – Professional, scientific and technical activities	25	40	3610	1420
N – Administrative and support service activities	6	1	144	27
O – Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	3	0	481	32
P – Education	1	0	0	0
Q – Human health and social work activities	3	1	65	2
S – Other service activities	4	3	3947	106
Total	311	3203	811,388	79,153

Source: [AJPES \(2014\)](#).

On the other hand, cooperatives are gradually being established in sectors where they have not been present for a long time. For instance, active cooperatives that submitted annual accounts for 2008 were registered in 17 and five years later (submitting annual reports for 2013) already in 19 sectors of activity ([AJPES, 2008, 2014](#)).

3.3. Public policy and changes in the public opinion towards cooperatives

During the transition to a market economy, cooperatives were not privatised in the same manner as enterprises with 'social capital'.² The transitional and final provisions of the Act on Cooperatives defined the property that had social ownership in

existing cooperatives at the time of enactment as well as the property cooperatives acquired through denationalisation and through ownership transformation of certain enterprises as indivisible cooperative capital with substantially the same status as was provided for indivisible reserves by the Act on Economic Cooperatives from 1937. This means, practically speaking, that only cooperatives existing at the time of the enactment of the cooperative legislation in 1992 have such indivisible capital. The property acquired by cooperatives thereafter is not indivisible by the act itself. From the surplus realised after the enactment of cooperative legislation in 1992, at least 5% has to be allocated for obligatory reserves, while the remaining part is freely distributable among members. The property corresponding to obligatory reserves may be distributed among members after the dissolution of a cooperative, while in the case of exit, a member is entitled to the amount of her share and, if so provided by the statute, also to a part of voluntary reserves.

The mainstream of system changes – privatisation of enterprises with partly free voucher distribution among all citizens, new entrepreneurial models of (reintroduced) commercial companies and individual entrepreneurs – attracted great attention from the

² In this context, 'social capital' refers to the socialist Yugoslav form of capital ownership predominant in the economy of self-managed companies. Capital was socially owned, to differentiate it from government ownership or private ownership of assets. According to provisions about ownership transformation, the social capital was calculated by deducting liabilities from the worth of socially owned assets of the enterprise. Therefore, the term social capital in this context should not be confused with Putnam's notion of 'social capital'.

public. In spite of the general character of the new cooperative legislation, cooperatives could not gain an image as being a universally acceptable business model, because they did not expand in various activities like commercial companies and retained their greatest importance as associations of farmers.

One of the reasons for such a development was also public policy, which preferred the newly introduced commercial companies and individual entrepreneurs over cooperatives in some areas.

Some signals in this direction were already made by sectorial legislation. Thus, for instance, the legislation continued to exclude cooperatives as a legal form for banking activities or even introduced new limitations. The first Act on Investment Funds and Management Companies ([Zakon o investicijskih skladih in družbah za upravljanje, 1994](#)) did not allow cooperatives to hold shares directly or indirectly (except through banks) in the management companies of investment funds (while individuals and joint stock companies were allowed). An amendment to the Construction Act from 1996 ([Zakon o spremembah in dopolnitvah zakona o graditvi objektov, 1996](#)) allowed only commercial companies and individual entrepreneurs (but not cooperatives at that point) to directly perform construction and design activities. In proceedings before the Constitutional Court, the last two limitations were defended by the legislator and by the government as being founded within the “public interest”. It is interesting that the Constitutional Court did not find the provisions restricting shareholding of cooperatives in management companies ([Odločba U-I-398/96 from 15 June 2000](#)) and provisions excluding cooperatives from construction activities ([Odločba U-I-306/98–27 from 11 April 2002](#)) to be in conflict with the Constitution. However, both limitations were removed by subsequent legislation some years later.

Cooperatives were not as interesting as privatised enterprises, because they did not offer so much room for individual appropriation of the existing ‘social capital’. As individualistic values are deemed to have strong roots in present Slovenian society ([Svetlik, 2012](#)), the attitude of the public towards the intergenerational, indivisible capital of cooperatives seems to be at least reserved.

After special sales tax exemptions and subventions for contractual production of farmer members for their cooperatives had been abolished in the early 1990s and the state began to stimulate family farms, artisans and later individual entrepreneurs directly, some cooperatives, above all in housing, ceased their activities, while other cooperatives of farmers, artisans and individual entrepreneurs faced fierce competition.

From 1991 to 2004, the main legislative basis for general measures to promote entrepreneurship was the Small Business Development Act ([Zakon o razvoju malega gospodarstva, 1991](#)), which applied only to craft cooperatives, individual entrepreneurs and enterprises in non-agricultural activities with up to 125 employees (thus excluding farmers’ cooperatives).

The Act Governing the Rescue and Restructuring Aid for Companies in Difficulty ([Zakon o pomoči za reševanje in prestrukturiranje gospodarskih družb v težavah, 2002](#)) made the aid available only to commercial companies but not to cooperatives having their registered office in Slovenia (Art. 2 of the Act).

The first Supportive Environment for Entrepreneurship Act of 2004 ([Zakon o podpornem okolju za podjetništvo, 2004](#)) included cooperatives into the scheme of supportive measures, but only for three years. The second Act with the same name, adopted in 2007 ([Zakon o podpornem okolju za podjetništvo, 2007](#)), explicitly stated that only commercial companies and individual entrepreneurs should be considered as enterprises, and cooperatives were implicitly excluded from the promotional, educational and consulting measures and financial incentives foreseen by this Act.

The Republic of Slovenia Guarantee Scheme Act ([Zakon o jamstveni shemi Republike Slovenije, 2009](#)) in its original version provided guarantee for commercial companies and not for cooperatives. For this reason, the act had been vetoed by the State Council, but it was enacted with an absolute majority in the State Assembly thereafter. It was soon amended so that cooperatives were entitled to the support as well.

The economic crisis caused the failure of numerous companies causing the high rate of unemployment that incited search for alternative entrepreneurial models. The revived interest in cooperatives is to a great extent attributable to the Social Entrepreneurship Act ([Zakon o socialnem podjetništvu, 2011](#)), which was passed by the Slovenian Parliament in 2011. It is interesting that the draft bill was not introduced by the government as usual but by a group of members of the Parliament.

The Act on Social Entrepreneurship laid down the conditions under which non-profit legal entities may acquire the status of a so called social enterprise and the measures to promote social entrepreneurship. A social enterprise is not a special organisational form and may adopt the legal form of a society, institute, foundation, company, cooperative society, European cooperative society or other legal entity governed by private law. The organisational requirements for social enterprises are to a great extent the same or at least similar to those internationally accepted for cooperatives: autonomous initiative, voluntariness, independence, market orientation, equality of members, stakeholder participation in management, non-profit purpose of operation and democratic governance.

The Act especially emphasises that social enterprise operates not only for the benefit of its members but also for the public benefit. The property and surplus of such an enterprise are indivisible (with some strictly defined exemptions). In addition, the Act widely enumerates the social entrepreneurship activities, which range from producing certain goods (e.g. organic foods) to performing various social, cultural, educational, tourist and similar services.

An enterprise may acquire the status of a social enterprise regarding its activity (if it performs social entrepreneurship activities and employs at least one worker in the first year of its operation and at least two workers in subsequent years; social enterprise of type A); or regardless of its activity, if it employs at least one third of total staff from the most vulnerable groups (social enterprise of type B).

According to the evidence accessible at the website of the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, there were 57 active social enterprises registered as of 18 December 2014. The most numerous social enterprises are established as associations (20) and institutes (19), followed by cooperatives (9), companies limited by shares (8) and foundations (1) – the choice of legal form seems to be influenced by the degree of founders’ autonomy to shape the inner structure and legal position of a social enterprise ([Ministrstvo za gospodarski razvoj in tehnologijo, 2015](#)).

4. Sectorial insights

4.1. Farmers’ agricultural and forestry cooperatives

Among all cooperatives in Slovenia, farmers’ marketing and supply cooperatives have the longest tradition and, measured by the number of employees, total turnover, assets and similar indicators, the greatest economic importance as well.

The main reason for the existence of farmers’ cooperatives and at the same time the greatest challenge for their future is probably the great fragmentation of land (this weakness may be, to a certain extent, countered by organised marketing).

As downstream sectors, food processing and especially retail trade show high concentration ratios and large players have been entering the market; the concentration of supply of agricultural products through cooperatives is important for a better bargaining position of farmers. Thus, for instance, the largest Slovenian dairy producer *Ljubljanske mlekarne* (Dairies of Ljubljana) was taken over in 2013 by the French milk giant *Lactalis*, and the largest domestic retailer Mercator was sold by the consortium of banks and other largest owners to the largest Croatian retail group *Agrokor*, the leading retail company in the region.

Natural constraints (about 86% of the total territory of Slovenia represents areas with natural constraints for agricultural production, mainly due to the relief configuration/[Ministrstvo za kmetijstvo in okolje, 2014](#)) increase the production costs, which is partly compensated by the agricultural policy.

Farmers' cooperatives have long been focussed on cost leadership. In recent years, changes in consumers' preferences, agricultural policy and supply chain led them more towards differentiation and focusing strategies.

The Parliamentary Resolution regarding strategic directions for the development of the Slovenian agriculture and food industry ([Resolucija o strateških usmeritvah razvoja slovenskega kmetijstva in živilstva do leta 2020 – "Zagotovimo.si hrano za jutri", 2011](#)) emphasises the need to improve food self-supply (which fell drastically after Slovenia entered the EU). This goal is logically connected with short supply chains, loyalty of consumers to domestically produced food, development of quality schemes and competitive cooperatives.

Until now, agricultural cooperatives have managed to maintain their bargaining position: according to a study of University of Wageningen, in 2010 the total market share of agricultural cooperatives in Slovenia for 8 important agricultural products was a little higher than the average in the EU and the highest among cooperatives from member states that acceded in 2004 or later ([Bijman et al., 2012](#), p. 30). The market shares of agricultural cooperatives in the total purchases from private farms amount to 93% for beef, 78% for raw milk, 71% for grapes, 68% for vegetables, 42% for cereals, 29% for wood and 25% for pork and cereals ([Udovč, 2012](#), p. 22). The agricultural cooperatives also have more than 300 retail outlets through which they supply members and the countryside population with agricultural inputs and consumer goods ([Zadružna zveza Slovenije, 2014](#), p. 30).

In future, farmers' cooperatives will have to confirm their competitiveness in regard to (1) direct marketing of farmers to consumers (on farms, through "milk mats" – milk vending machines, etc.), (2) direct sale of products to food processing companies and (3) direct sale from farm to retailer. The competitive pressure on farmers' cooperatives will increase.

As forestry is an important activity on many farms, farmers' cooperatives provide marketing of wood as well.

In recent years, some new micro or small cooperatives emerged for local supply, especially for the marketing of ecologically produced food.

4.2. Credit cooperatives and cooperative banks

After the Second World War, all credit cooperatives in Slovenia were wound up. As the banking legislation does not allow credit institutions to be formed as cooperatives, but only as public limited companies, credit cooperatives have up to now never resumed their activity as grass-roots organisations of individuals.

In 1969, Slovenian legislation allowed farmers' cooperative organisations in agriculture and forestry to form so called »*hranilno kreditne službe*« (saving and loan services) that gathered funds from the rural population and granted credits to farmers and cooperatives ([Zakon o ustanavljanju hranilno kreditnih služb](#)

[kmetijskih in gozdnogospodarskih delovnih organizacij, 1969](#)). Since these financial institutions were not allowed to provide all banking transactions, agricultural and forestry cooperatives, their savings and loan services and the union of these services established the Slovenian Agricultural Cooperative Bank Ltd in 1990. In 2004, it was renamed "Deželna banka Slovenije d. d." (Country Bank of Slovenia Ltd). In the course of adaptation to EU banking legislation, all saving and loan services merged with their union, which transferred all assets and banking operations to the Country Bank of Slovenia Ltd in 2004. The union of saving and loan services became the greatest shareholder of the bank (with more than 45% shares) and transformed itself into a holding cooperative. In recent years, the bank has been ranked "among the top three Slovenian banks according to the state of development and wide-spread branch network" ([Deželna banka Slovenije, 2014](#), p. 16).

4.3. Housing cooperatives

Housing cooperatives were numerous at the time of transition, when the purchase of construction material was exempted from sales tax. Under the Housing Act of 1991, cooperatives could acquire the status of non-profit housing organisations that may be promoted by the state and municipalities; this status was by the amendment of the present Housing Act ([Zakon o spremembah in dopolnitvah Stanovanjskega zakona, 2008](#)) of 2008 restricted only to legal persons established as commercial companies.

According to the accompanying document to the draft of the National Housing Programme, the supply of apartments in Slovenia peaked in the period between 2004 and 2007. During the subsequent crisis, it fell drastically and this fall led to a significant number of unsold apartments. This may confirm the statement that the market alone is not able to resolve the supply of housing in the long run ([Ministrstvo za infrastrukturo in prostor, 2012](#), p. 3).

The draft of the National Programme on Housing Policy considers housing cooperatives as a tool for the self-help of citizens in partnership with the public sector. Housing cooperatives are seen as an alternative form of housing supply ([Ministrstvo za infrastrukturo in prostor, 2014](#)).

A typical housing cooperative manages multi-dwelling buildings for condominium owners and business premises. New initiatives plan a more active role of cooperatives through seeking the most appropriate housing for their members and a wide offer of common services available to the inhabitants, which would stimulate cohabitation of different generations ([Horvat, 2013](#)).

4.4. Worker cooperatives

The employees who, during the ownership transformation, acquired a significant, sometimes also prevalent share in many typically work-intensive firms through internal distribution and share buy-out became gradually less and less important shareholders due to the concentration of ownership in the following years ([Kanjuro Mrčela, 2002](#)).

Regardless of their participation in ownership, employees are entitled to participate in the management of commercial organisations, including cooperatives, according to the Constitution. This provision of the Constitution (Article 75) is implemented through the Worker Participation in Management Act ([Zakon o sodelovanju delavcev pri upravljanju, 1993](#)).

However, the Financial Participation Act ([Zakon o udeležbi delavcev pri dobičku, 2008](#)) regulates the participation of workers in the profit and provides tax incentives for this participation only in capital companies and not cooperatives.

As the financial crisis and insolvency proceedings threaten jobs in some firms, in several cases workers have tried to take over firms

in financial distress. It seems that this operation is easier in cases where workers provide only a part of the necessary capital but more difficult when workers establish cooperatives after the firm goes bankrupt (two cooperatives, Novi Novoles and Novi Armal, which intended to buy the enterprise/Novoles/or a part of the enterprise/Armal/, were not successful (Kos, 2014)). The most ambitious initiative in this direction was the proposal to establish a worker-consumer-supplier cooperative (Naš Mercator, Our Mercator) in order to acquire the shares of the largest domestic retailer Mercator when it was offered for sale (Slovenski forum socialnega podjetništva, 2014).

Since the establishment of worker cooperatives is a complex issue, it could be more successful if a specialised supporting network (advisory services, funds) was set up and more long-term oriented measures were in place.

4.5. Cooperatives of self-employed persons. The number of trades/crafts cooperatives reached its peak at the end of the 1980s

However, after special tax exemptions for craftsmen/tradesmen as members of cooperatives had been cancelled and several enterprises, business partners of craft cooperatives, had gone into bankruptcy, the number of craft cooperatives began to fall. In the Business Register of Slovenia, 26 tradesmen's cooperatives could be found at the end of June 2014, 8 of which are in bankruptcy or in dissolution proceedings.

Some healthcare cooperatives (established by physicians) have been active already since the 1990s, and several initiatives were given or have already been realised to establish journalists' and arts cooperatives in recent years.

The National Cultural Programme for the period 2014–2017 foresees organising all stakeholders in visual arts into cooperatives for production and promotion, establishment of a national performance cooperative and financial support for new business models in media industry, above all social enterprises and cooperatives (Resolucija o nacionalnem programu za kulturo 2014–2017, 2013).

Cooperatives in these areas could substantially improve the conditions of precarious and self-employed workers.

5. Conclusion

Like in other countries, in Slovenia the economic crisis increased interest in cooperatives as an alternative business and organisational model. This trend is probably more obvious since it coincides with the change of generations (the generation born after the independence of Slovenia has now reached more than twenty years of age) and may be traced to public opinion – from the media, general and sectorial development strategies and programmes of political parties.

On a practical level, there are already existing cooperatives among which those for marketing the supply of farmers have the longest, although not a continuous tradition. In other sectors, where cooperatives have not been present for many years, new cooperative initiatives began almost from scratch.

The successful operation and growth of an alternative business model is a demanding, although not impossible task that requires not only financial but also social capital (Valentinov, 2004). The risks of this task may be managed in a better manner by supporting networks, the outlines of which are gradually drawn by the new and existing cooperatives, their associations and other supporting institutions through exchange of information and best practice, education and training and activities aimed at the public and policy makers.

As cooperatives typically grow organically, through admission of new members and reinvesting their surplus, their development

will probably require time, perseverance and patience. Like investor-owned firms, cooperatives may merge but may not be taken over. The organic growth, including intergenerational funds of cooperatives, may be more sustainable and resilient against threats from the environment.

Not only financial but also cultural and other factors may be a serious obstacle to the transformation of existing non-cooperative enterprises into a cooperative. In this regard, it may be symptomatic that no existing enterprise has acquired the status of social enterprise since the Act of Social Entrepreneurship has been applied.

For future policy, three brief recommendations could be formulated in conclusion.

First, the development of cooperatives will require a more coherent and systematic economic policy, where actual measures are brought in line with the declared support and cooperatives are not treated less favourably than other economic actors.

Second, the movement can go further only from its current place; it cannot skip the critical points in its life cycle. It seems that co-ops will emerge from local paths of development, but can learn about risk management from others.

Third: for co-ops to become a viable business alternative, they should not be given the last chance after all other options have been exhausted and have failed.

References

- AJPES (2008). *Informacija o poslovanju gospodarskih družb v Republiki Sloveniji v letu 2008*. [Information about operation of commercial companies in Slovenia in the year 2008]. Retrieved from http://www.ajpes.si/doc/LP/Informacije/Informacija_LP_GD_zadruga_2008.pdf
- AJPES (2014). *Informacija o poslovanju gospodarskih družb v Republiki Sloveniji v letu 2013*. [Information about operation of commercial companies in Slovenia in the year 2013]. Retrieved from http://www.ajpes.si/doc/LP/Informacije/Informacija_LP_GD_zadruga_2013.pdf
- AJPES (2015). *Poslovni subjekti v Poslovnem registru Slovenije po področjih dejavnosti SKD in po skupinah, stanje na dan 31. 12. 2014*. [Business subjects in the Business Register of Slovenia by area of Activity NACE and groups, as of December 31st, 2014]. Retrieved from http://www.ajpes.si/doc/Registri/PRS/Porocila/posl_subj_poo_31122014.pdf
- Bijman, J. et al. (2012). *Support for farmers' cooperatives final report*. Brussels: European Commission Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/external-studies/2012/support-farmers-coop/fulltext_en.pdf
- Deželna banka Slovenije (2014). *Annual report 2013*. Retrieved from <http://www.dbs.si/pdf/DEZELNA-BANKA-ANG-LP-2013.pdf>
- Gesetz vom 9. (1873). *April 1873, über Erwerbs- und Wirthschaftsgenossenschaften* [Act from April 7th, 1873 on Industrial and Provident Associations and Societies. StF.: RGBL. No. 70/1873 ... BGBl. I Nr. 70].
- Horvat, M. (2013). *Zadrugo do stanovanja*. [How to get an apartment with the help of a cooperative. Mladina]. Retrieved from <http://www.mladina.si/146371/z-zadrugo-do-stanovanja/>
- Kanjuo Mrčela, A. (2002). *Lastništvo zaposlenih v Sloveniji na začetku tisočletja*. [Workers' ownership in Slovenia at the beginning of the millenium]. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede Retrieved from <http://www.efesonline.org/CEEONet/REPORTS%202002/National%20Report%20Slovenia%20SL.pdf>
- Kos, D. (2014). *Zadružni iniciativi za Novoles in Armal brez uspeha*. [Cooperative initiatives for Novoles and Armal unsuccessful]. Retrieved from http://www.siol.net/novice/gospodarstvo/2014/02/zadruzni_novoles_in_armal.aspx
- Krek, J. E. (1895). *Črne bukve kmečkega stanu*. [Black Book of the Farmers' Profession]. Ljubljana: Katoliška tiskarna.
- Lukan, W. (1989). *The second phase of Slovene cooperativism (1894–1918)*. *Slovene Stud.*, 11(1–2), 83–96.
- Maček, M. (1989). *Urejanje kmečkih dolgov v stari Jugoslaviji* [Regulation of farmers' indebtedness in old Yugoslavia]. *Zgodovinski časopis*, (3), 417–437.
- Ministrstvo za gospodarski razvoj in tehnologijo. (2015). *Evidenca socialnih podjetij*. [Evidence of social enterprises]. Retrieved from http://www.mgrt.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/regionalni_razvoj/socialno_podjetnistvo/evidenca_so_p/
- Ministrstvo za infrastrukturo in prostor (2014). *Nacionalni stanovanjski program. Gradivo za predhodno posvetovanje, junij – september 2014*. [National housing program. Preliminary conference material]. Retrieved from http://www.mzip.gov.si/fileadmin/mzip.gov.si/pageuploads/Prostor/Stavanja/Nacionalni_stanovanjski_program_junij_2014.pdf
- Ministrstvo za infrastrukturo in prostor (2012). *Stanovanjska problematika v Republiki Sloveniji*. [The housing issue in the Republic of Slovenia]. Retrieved from http://www.zdus-zveza.si/docs/POMEMBNI%20DOKUMENTI/Stanovanjska_problematika_v_RS_%281%29.pdf

- Ministrstvo za kmetijstvo in okolje. (2014). *Slovenija – Program razvoja podeželja (nacionalni)*. [Slovenia – The national rural development program]. Retrieved from http://www.program-podezelja.si/images/PRP14-20_Vlada.pdf
- Mioković, V. B., & Šljukić, S. (2012). Razaranje socijalnog kapitala na primeru agrarne politike u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji (1945–1953) [Destruction of Social Capital: the Case of Agrarian Policy in Socialist Yugoslavia (1945–1953)]. *Kultura polisa*, 18 (Year IX), 133–149.
- Odločba (2002). [Decision of the Constitutional Court] U-I-306/98–27 from April 11th. *Official Journal of the RS* No. 37/2002.
- Odločba (2000). [Decision of the Constitutional Court] U-I-398/96 from June 15th. *Official Journal of the RS* No. 61/2000.
- Postava z dne 7. (1873). Aprila 1873 od pridobilnih in gospodarstvenih društvih ali tovarištvih. [Act from April 7th, 1873 on Industrial and Provident Associations and Societies]. In *State Statute Book, May 17th, Vol. XXV* (70, p. 273).
- Resolucija o nacionalnem programu za kulturo 2014–2017 (ReNPK14-17) (2013). [Resolution on the 2014–2017 National Programme for Culture]. *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 99.
- Resolucija o strateških usmeritvah razvoja slovenskega kmetijstva in živilstva do leta 2020 – »Zagotovimo si hrano za jutri (2011). [Resolution about strategic directions of development of agriculture and food industry until 2020 – »Let's provide our food for tomorrow]. *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 25.
- Slovenski forum socialnega podjetništva. (2014). *Javna pobuda za alternativni odkup in preoblikovanje Mercatorja v kooperativo Naš Mercator*. [A public offer for an alternative purchase of Mercator and its transformation into the Naš Mercator cooperative]. Retrieved from <http://fsp.si/javna-pobuda-za-alternativni-odkup-in-preoblikovanje-mercatorja-v-kooperativo-nas-mercator>
- SURS (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije) [Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia] (1964). *Statistični letopis* [Statistical Annual 1964, Ljubljana].
- SURS (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije) [Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia] (1971). *Statistični letopis* [Statistical Annual 1971, Ljubljana].
- SURS (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije) [Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia] (1976). *Statistični letopis* [Statistical Annual 1976, Ljubljana].
- SURS (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije) [Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia] (1981). *Statistični letopis* [Statistical Annual 1981, Ljubljana].
- SURS (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije) [Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia] (1986). *Statistični letopis* [Statistical Annual 1986, Ljubljana].
- SURS (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije) [Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia] (1991). *Statistični letopis* [Statistical Annual 1991, Ljubljana].
- Svetlik, I. (2012). *Vrednote so omogočile slovenski preboj. Zdaj grozijo s sivim povprečjem* [Our values made the Slovenian breakthrough possible. Now they are threatening us with the gray average, Delo, June 6th 2012].
- Temeljni zakon o zadrugah [Basic Act on Cooperatives] (1949). *Official Journal of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia*, Nr. 49.
- Udovč, A. (2012). *Support for farmers' cooperatives. Country report Slovenia*. Wageningen UR: Wageningen.
- Uredba o kmetijskih zadrugah [Regulation on Agricultural Cooperatives] (1954). *Official Journal of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia*, No. 5.
- Ustava Republike Slovenije [Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia] (1991). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 33.
- Ustavni zakon o temeljih družbene in politične ureditve Federativne Ljudske Republike Jugoslavije in zveznih organih oblasti [Constitutional Act on the Basis of Social and Political Organisation of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia and Federal Bodies of Power] (1953). *Official Journal of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia*, No. 3.
- Valenčič, V. (1939). Pregled našega zadrúžnega gibanja in stanja. In *Spominski zbornik Slovenije. A survey over our cooperative movement and position. Memorial Almanach for Slovenia* (red. Lavrič, J. et al.) Ljubljana: Jubilej.
- Valentinov, V. L. (2004). Toward a social capital theory of cooperative organisation. *Journal of Cooperative Studies*, 37(3), 5–20.
- Zadrúžna zveza Slovenije (2014). *Annual report for 2013 (internal material)*, Ljubljana.
- Zakon o denacionalizaciji (ZDen) [Act on Denationalisation] (1991a). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 27.
- Zakon o gospodarskih zadrugah [Act on Economic Cooperatives] (1937). *The Official Journal of the King's Administration of the Drava Banovina for the year 1937*, No. 81/757.
- Zakon o investicijskih skladih in družbah za upravljanje (ZISDU) [Investment Trusts and Management Companies Act] (1994). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 6.
- Zakon o jamstveni shemi Republike Slovenije (ZJShemRS) [Republic of Slovenia Guarantee Scheme Act] (2009). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 33.
- Zakon o lastninskem preoblikovanju podjetij (ZLPP) [Act on Ownership Transformation of Enterprises] (1992a). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 55.
- Zakon o podjetjih [Act on Enterprises] (1988). *Official Journal of the Federative Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia*, Nr. 77.
- Zakon o podpornem okolju za podjetništvo (ZPOP) [Supportive Environment for Entrepreneurship Act] (2004). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 40.
- Zakon o podpornem okolju za podjetništvo (ZPOP-1) [Supportive Environment for Entrepreneurship Act] (2007). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 107.
- Zakon o pomoči za reševanje in prestrukturiranje gospodarskih družb v težavah (ZPRPGDT) [Act governing the rescue and restructuring aid for companies in difficulty] (2002). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 110.
- Zakon o razvoju malega gospodarstva [Small Business Development Act] (1991b). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 18.
- Zakon o socialnem podjetništvu (ZSocP) [Social Entrepreneurship Act] (2011). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 20.
- Zakon o sodelovanju delavcev pri upravljanju (ZSDU) [Worker Participation in Management Act] (1993). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 42.
- Zakon o spremembah in dopolnitvah Stanovanjskega zakona (SZ-1A) [Act on Amendments to the Housing Act] (2008a). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 57.
- Zakon o spremembah in dopolnitvah zakona o graditvi objektov (ZGO-B) [Act Amending the Construction Act] (1996). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 59.
- Zakon o udeležbi delavcev pri dobičku (ZUDD) [Financial Participation Act] (2008b). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 25.
- Zakon o ustanavljanju hrenilno kreditnih služb kmetijskih in gozdnogospodarskih delovnih organizacij [Act on Establishing the Saving and Loan Services of Agricultural and Forestry Labor Organisations] (1969). *Official Journal of the SRS*, No. 22.
- Zakon o zadrugah [Act on Cooperatives] (1990). *Official Journal of the Federative Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia*, Nr. 3.
- Zakon o zadrugah (ZZad) [Act on Cooperatives] (1992b). *Official Journal of the RS*, No. 13.
- Zakon z dne 10. maja 1903 o pregledu pridobitnih in gospodarskih zadrug ter drugih društev [The May 10th, 1903 Act on the Review of Profitable and Economic Cooperatives and Other Association] (1903). *National Statute Book* (No. 133, p. p409).
- Zakon o združevanju kmetov [Act on Associations of Farmers] (1972). *Official Journal of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia*, Nr. 22.