



PRESS RELEASE

**A United Call for Strong and Simple Regulation
at 55th EACB General Assembly in Birmingham**

Birmingham, 9 May 2025 — The **European Association of Co-operative Banks (EACB)** held its **55th General Assembly** in Birmingham on the margins of the [2nd EACB Global Cooperative Banking Forum](#) as part of the Building Societies Association (BSA) 2025 Annual Conference. The meeting provided an important platform for cooperative banking leaders from across Europe and beyond to discuss the current strategic, regulatory, and operational challenges facing the sector and its competitiveness.

Held on occasion of the 250th anniversary since the establishment of the first building society, newly appointed BSA Chair **Julie-Ann Haines** reflected on how building societies today can best balance heritage and innovation. Against this backdrop, **Priscille Szeradki**, President of the EACB, emphasised the enduring contributions of the sector: *"Cooperative and mutual institutions have long been anchors of stability—and today, their values are more relevant than ever. As we face global uncertainty and economic transformation, our sector continues to lead with purpose, proximity, and resilience. With thoughtful regulatory dialogue and stronger international cooperation, we can not only adapt but thrive—ensuring our members and communities are well-supported in the years ahead."*

Charlotte Gerken, Executive Director for UK Deposit Takers Supervision at the **UK Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA)**, intervened as guest speaker to discuss current developments in the supervisory and regulatory domain. The exchange centred on ongoing work for UK's Strong and simple regime, key risks facing the sector including cyber-threats, the rise of AI and climate change, and how cooperative and mutual lenders can navigate them.

Looking ahead, members emphasised the importance of the EACB Secretariat's work advocating for simplification, particularly in the realms of the sustainability reporting and prudential framework, as well as on files like the Financial Information Data Access (FiDA) and the Retail Investment Strategy (RIS).

The meeting was also the occasion for the formal [admission of Sicredi as new EACB associate member](#). Founded in 1902 as the first credit cooperative in Latin America, Sicredi is now the seventh largest financial institution in Brazil by loan portfolio and the sixth largest by deposits.

Nina Schindler, CEO of the EACB, thanked **Haines** and **Robin Fieth**, BSA Chief Executive, for their hospitality, and stressed: *"Europe and its economies are facing an unprecedented need for large-scale investment for the green and digital transitions and the reinforcement of security and defence. To meet these challenges, a regulatory and supervisory environment that is simple, strong, and conducive to innovation and growth is more urgent than ever. This would allow the unique business models of cooperative and mutual banks to continue playing a key role in achieving European ambitions, as they provide fundamental contributions to regional cohesion, social resilience and economic prosperity."*

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About the EACB:

The voice of 2.400 local and retail banks, 90 million members, 227 million customers in Europe

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EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF CO-OPERATIVE BANKS

The Cooperative Difference: Sustainability, Proximity, Governance

The European Association of Co-operative Banks ([EACB](http://www.eacb.coop)) is the voice of the cooperative banks in Europe. It represents, promotes and defends the common interests of its 27 member institutions and of cooperative banks in general. Cooperative banks form decentralised networks which are subject to banking as well as cooperative legislation. Democracy, transparency and proximity are the three key characteristics of the cooperative banks' business model. With 2,400 locally operating banks and 36,200 outlets co-operative banks are widely represented throughout the enlarged European Union, playing a major role in the financial and economic system. They have a long tradition in serving 227 million customers, mainly consumers, retailers and communities. The co-operative banks in Europe represent 90 million members and 732,000 employees and have a total average market share of about 20%.

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