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**PRESS RELEASE EACB**

**EACB creates a Think Tank on Co-operative Banks in Europe**

*Brussels, 26 May 2008* – The European Association of Co-operative Banks (EACB) has launched a European think tank on co-operative banks in Brussels. This initiative brings together academics from various European countries who have deep knowledge and expertise on co-operative banks. The think tank will be a centre of knowledge on co-operative banks with the immediate aim of gathering existing research and making it available to the public. In the medium term, the ambition is to bridge the research gap on co-operative banks and to provide input for the European institutions and international organisations.

Indeed the co-operative bank business model has been much neglected by mainstream research, with only 1% of existing economic research in Europe being devoted to co-operative banks, as pointed out by the IMF Working paper “Co-operative Banks in Europe: Policy Issues” of July 2007. However, these types of banks play a key role in the European financial and banking systems. Half of all existing banks in Europe belong to the decentralised network of co-operative banks while their market share in the enlarged EU is about 20%. In some countries, the market share on deposits lies well above this figure, as is the case in Austria, Germany, Finland, France, Italy and the Netherlands.

Dr. Christopher Pleister, President of the EACB and of the National Association of German Co-operative Banks (Bundesverband der Deutschen Volksbanken und Raiffeisenbanken [BVR]), stated: “This is a very valuable initiative for our sector. With the think tank, we build a network of professional research about co-operative banks. This initiative aims to correct the disproportion between existing literature on co-operative banks and their weight in the European economy.”

**Founding Members of EACB Think Tank are:**

Akademie Deutscher Genossenschaften ADG, Montabaur, Germany  
Center for Corporate Governance, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Grenoble-II University, France

**AN ASSOCIATION ON THE MOVE**



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National University of Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyzstan  
Helsinki School of Economics, Finland  
Rabo International Advisory Services, Netherlands  
School of Management, Queen's University Belfast, United Kingdom  
Université de la Méditerranée-Faculté des Sciences Economiques et de Gestion, France  
Université de Metz, France  
Université Paris 13, France  
University of Sherbrooke, Québec, Canada  
University of Bari, Italy  
University "La Sapienza" of Rome, Italy

*Existing research and studies published by the think tank's founding members will be available at the beginning of June at [www.eurocoopbanks.coop](http://www.eurocoopbanks.coop)*

EACB Contact:

*General Manager: Herve GUIDER (Tel : +32 2 230-11-24), [h.guider@eurocoopbanks.coop](mailto:h.guider@eurocoopbanks.coop)*

*Communications & Research Officer: Elisa BEVILACQUA (Tel +32 2 286 98 42), [e.bevilacqua@eurocoopbanks.coop](mailto:e.bevilacqua@eurocoopbanks.coop)*

About the EACB

The European Association of Co-operative Banks (EACB) is the voice of the co-operative banks in Europe. The EACB represents the interests of 28 co-operative banking associations at the European level. Founded in 1970, the organisation promotes co-operation amongst its members and represents the co-operative banking sector both in EU institutions as well as in dealings with the European Central Bank. With 4,500 institutions and 63,000 branches, co-operative banks are well represented within the European Union and play a leading role in the European economies and financial markets. The banking business with 140 million customers, primarily private customers and small and mid-sized corporate clients as well as municipalities has a long tradition. The co-operative banks in Europe have 47 million members, employ 730,000 staff members and have an average market share of 20 percent.

Website: [www.eurocoopbanks.coop](http://www.eurocoopbanks.coop)