

THE SELF-MANAGED SUPERMARKET COOPECO IN CHARLEROIS, BELGIUM

The [Coopéco supermarket](#) owned by its members is being implemented in the city of Charlerois in Belgium.

Inspired by the experience of the [Park Slope Food Coop](#) (New York, United States) and by the success of the [BEES Coop](#) which operates in Brussels, Coopéco shows the great potential of the self-managed supermarkets.



Following the experiences of participatory supermarkets, the purpose of Coopéco is to create a large-scale cooperative that offers everyone access to quality food and affordable prices. Putting in place an alternative to mass distribution, the store functions thanks to the active participation of its members, each one contributing to the process according to its own skills. The priorities of the Coopéco Supermarket are the promotion of local producers and short commercial chains, the supply of stores with ethical and seasonal products, and finally the fight against food waste.



The Coopéco Cooperative was established in December 2016 by a group of founding members interested in creating the participatory supermarket, which opened in October 2017. The members of the Cooperative participate in bimonthly assemblies to define operational guidelines (values, products, prices, management) with a democratic decision-making process.



Today the Cooperative counts 360 members and continues to implement initiatives to involve new people. Cooperators commit themselves to work 3 hours per month at the supermarket, accomplishing the majority of the tasks. Adopting a management model based on the direct contribution of the members, a broad social base of the cooperative makes it possible to achieve in practice the objective of reducing costs, in addition to expand the impact of the project

The Cooperative has organized several working groups, called *caddies*, where every member can bring his skills: fundraising, communication, management of the purchasing, development of the facilities, research of the products, recruitment of the members, labelling, delivery, services associated with the store.



The Coopéco Supermarket is open 3 days a week and offers several hundred different products that are usually found in a supermarket. The selection of the products meets the following key criteria:

- Local, highlighting local products and commercial short-chain strategies;
- Organic, selecting as much as possible products from organic or family farming;



- Sustainable, minimizing waste in order to respect nature and the environment;
- Fair, by respecting the producer and his work.

On October 28, 2018, the Coopéco Supermarket celebrated its first anniversary of functioning with a big party. The goals for the near future are the opening of the store 6 days a week; Reach 400 active cooperative members offering 3 hours per month of their time; Diversify products allowing to purchase almost everything in one place and the development of activities and services (workshops, nurseries) to create a community around Coopéco.

Meanwhile, in Belgium is always functioning the [BEES Coop](#) supermarket in Brussels, the [cooperative and participative grocery store WooCoop](#) in the city of Waterloo and it is proceeding the work of the [Cooperative Oufitcoop](#) to build a new participatory supermarket in Liege.

The managing system chosen by these participative supermarkets can be adopted in all cities and countries where the cooperative movement is already developed and where the cooperatives have access to funds for the initial investments of the projects. The commitment of members to work directly for 3 consecutive hours per month at the supermarket is compatible with the work shift of most people and the registration fees for the cooperative are low enough to promote the widest participation

To know more

[Supermarket Coopéco website](#)

[Supermarker Coopéco in Facebook](#)

[Hainaut Horizons Award](#)

[Video en Hainaut Horizons](#)

[Article in hainaut-terredegouts.be](#)

[Article in saw-b.be](#)

[BEES Coop](#)

[Oufitcoop cooperative website](#)

[Woocoop cooperative website](#)

[Park Slope Food Coop website](#)

[Supermarches Cooperatifs France website](#)

