

Social Cooperatives in the Function of the Development of Agriculture and Villages in Serbia

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Abstract

Depopulation of villages, as well as deagrarization, are increasingly pronounced problems in the Republic of Serbia. According to the findings of some analysts, every fourth village is either in the process of disappearing or will disappear within the next 15 years. An increasing problem in surviving villages is poverty, as small estate farmers cannot survive on the market. Under such conditions, the support of state institutions for the development of cooperatives is welcome, as an important factor for the unification, and thus the survival, of small estate farmers. This is support for the establishment of new or the revitalization of existing cooperatives. Of particular importance is state financial support for the development and strengthening of social cooperatives as a means of employing socially vulnerable categories, announced for 2021. In addition to employment, social cooperatives also have an obligation to invest at least half of generated profits for the implementation of social goals, which are of importance to vulnerable categories of citizens, as well as to the development of local communities. The development of social cooperatives is the current trend in EU Member States, which have adapted the legal basis for this purpose. The normative framework for the development of social cooperatives in the Republic of Serbia exists in the current Law on Cooperatives while several social cooperatives have already been established.

Key words: agriculture, village, social cooperatives, development, Republic of Serbia