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Abstract:

The purpose of the article is an attempt to approximate the Polish reader of legal and economic issues relating to cooperatives operating in agriculture and rural areas in Italy.

The first article presents the evolution of the Italian cooperative movement and statistics. Then the discussion focuses on co-operative organizations. Particular attention was paid to Confcooperative (Cooperazione Cooperative Italiane) created to represent, help, protection and control of the cooperative. In the following article presents the concept of cooperatives contained in the Italian Civil Code, the entity attributes and types. It is all about mainly mutual (cooperativa a mutualità prevalente) and “other” co-operatives. Then article presents issues related to the establishment of cooperatives, the rights and obligations of members, the cooperative bodies, with particular emphasis on three management systems. The article also addresses the issue of agricultural co-operatives as a business and social cooperatives contributing to the development of rural areas.

In conclusion, the author states that Italy is the country where the cooperative is not have only a long tradition, but also in the twenty-first century is very popular. These entities operate in every sector of the economy, starting from agriculture to the banking sector ending, with a strong presence in the trade, construction, services, energy and how important for the development of rural areas. They are both large and small businesses. Considerations show that the Italian cooperatives are very diverse, and thus fit the needs of society. Undoubtedly a major impact on its further development are the new legislation, in particular the amendments to the Civil Code concerning to cooperative.