



Pan-European democracy, social justice and environmental sustainability
For a just, sustainable and happy society

Justification of the statutes

We create the CosmoPolitical Cooperative. We unite the people that work and act together – that **cooperate** – in a **democratic** way, at the scale of the **European Union**, towards making our vision of a **happy and sustainable society** for the 21st century, the [Society of Agreement](#), a reality.

Our statutes include many options that may seem surprising, and deserve justification, which is given below.



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1 The CosmoPolitical Cooperative will demonstrate that pan-European democracy is possible

Many self-proclaimed experts deny that democracy be possible beyond national boundaries – in the same way that conservatives of the 19th century denied it would be possible beyond that of a city-state.

We are convinced that they are wrong – and will prove them wrong. Just like national democracies of the 19th and 20th centuries relied on the printed press, on the telegraph and telephone, and on physical meetings of people travelling by rail or road, our **pan-European democracy of the 21st century** relies on **Internet-based** information dissemination, discussion and decision-making. Whereas nation-states were built by adding a national communication language on top of local or regional dialects, we rely on **international communication languages** (be they or not designed for that purpose), on top of national or regional languages.

We are not a weak federation of national organisations. In these federations, the ultimate source of legitimacy lies in the national organisations, and the global position is the awkward compromise between decisions taken independently by these national organisations. These processes mimic inter-governmental negotiations, and bear the same democratic deficiencies: powerlessness, lack of accountability and of direct popular control.

The CosmoPolitical Cooperative is designed from inception to **act at pan-European scale**. We are **one organisation**, discussing collectively at the scale of the **European Union**, under the statute of a [European Cooperative Society](#) recognised across the whole EU. We support Transformational Actions by Cooperators and Social Entrepreneurship Activities **across the whole European Union**. We design and adopt **one political programme**, valid for all (even if we allow of course for the adaptation to national, regional or local realities). In all our decisions, there is only **one level of legitimate decision-making**, and **one source of democratic legitimacy**, that of the **whole organisation**.

We start from scratch. We are ambitious – not for ourselves, but regarding the transformations that we intend to achieve, at the scale of the massive challenges that human civilisation will face in the 21st century. In our views, the only unrealistic option is to believe that "business as usual" politics and institutions will do the job.

2 Democracy is a value and a process

2.1 Democracy must be embodied in processes

Democracy is a political value embodied in **processes**. What determines whether a decision is democratic or not is not the outcome (which can be right or wrong – even disastrous, as canonically illustrated since the 4th century BC by the Athenians' catastrophic decision to invade Sicily during the Peloponnesian war), but the process itself. This process must ensure that the



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opinion and perspective of every citizen has been taken into account – and yet that a meaningful decision is taken and implemented at the end.

In our views, any claim by an organisation for supporting democratic principles in society must be supported by an equivalent, or higher, level of **internal democracy**. This is a basic issue of coherence between words and deeds.

The CosmoPolitical Cooperative is serious in its claim for democracy, and embodies it in its operating principles. This is at the root of its decision to incorporate as a **cooperative**, a legal statute that explicitly requires to abide by the democratic principle "one person, one vote".

2.2 Democracy overcomes divergences peacefully, through deliberation on actions to be undertaken

Democracy does not however mean unanimity. The CosmoPolitical Cooperative acknowledges that **disagreements** in economic interests, social positions, cultures and values exist. We consider them as **normal**, and as an essential element of life in society – specifically when reasoning at pan-European scale. In our views, democracy is meant to provide the tools to overcome these disagreements **peacefully**, with **just and fair rules and procedures**.

The CosmoPolitical Cooperative privileges one means to overcome political disagreements. We seek agreement on **actions**, rather than on the underlying motivations. We accept very well that people converge on the same action, for very different reasons, and based on very different political or philosophical assumptions (just like the Communists and the Catholics agreed of Western Europe in the early 20th century on securing Sundays as a weekly day for rest – even if they disagreed on the existence of God).

The CosmoPolitical Cooperative operates through earnest, thorough and balanced **discussion** and **deliberation** between all Cooperators concerned.

In our views, deliberation and discussion have four virtues:

1. from a **technical** point of view, deliberation and discussion between people having different sources of information and competencies (e.g. from their professional or academic background) help ensuring – within the limits of human knowledge – that the action will have the intended effects, that its main unintended effects have being registered and included in the reflection (specifically when handling complex issues), and that its benefits and costs, and their distribution among stakeholders, have been calculated;
2. from a **political** point of view, deliberation and discussion between people having or representing different values and interests ensure that these values and interests are taken into account;
3. from a **procedural** point of view, deliberation and discussion are an opportunity for all to learn, from those that know more on a topic, but more generally about the variety of views, beliefs and concerns existing in society. It is also a fantastic opportunity to develop one's



argumentative competencies and knowledge;

4. from an **ethical** point of view, deliberation and discussion embody our belief that humans, and their political positions, are not fixed for ever by genetic, social, economic or cultural determinisms, and that they can be alive, change and evolve.

The technical and political arguments above explain why we **refuse** to rely on (often self-proclaimed) "**experts**" to design our action proposals. No "expert", whatever his/her background, can include the wealth of diversified experience, knowledge and competence of a group. More important still, no single "expert" can decide in the place of others how important their respective values and interests may be, and how to conclude satisfactory compromises.

Expanding our ethical argument, we believe that every human has the capacity to **convince**, and to **be convinced**, following a mutually respectful exchange of **arguments**, based on **explicit reasoning, verifiable facts** and **open sources of information**. We expect all our Cooperators to be open to this possibility, and to honestly engage in the debate.

This is why our internal rules and procedures include a space for **deliberation**, discussion and exchange of arguments. Thereby, every Cooperator can shape (and potentially change) his/her opinion and that of others, by listening to all arguments, and by providing his/her own. Our rules and procedures ultimately include votes based on the principle "one person, one vote", but they provide beforehand the deliberative space to overcome what without would be the mere quantitative assessment of power relationships between entrenched positions.

3 The rise in education levels justifies the broad participation in decision-making of people with all professional or academic backgrounds

The CosmoPolitical Cooperative acknowledges the fantastic **surge in education levels** experienced world-wide since the 1960s. Whereas tertiary education was accessible to a few percent of an age cohort in the early 1960s, even in Western Europe¹, this share has risen to 42% (OECD average) in 2015, and continues to rise². This means that the number of people that have the cognitive resources necessary to engage in debates regarding collective decisions, to **make proposals** and to **evaluate** them, has also exploded. Whereas representative democracy founded in the 18th century could be grounded on the fact that only a small educated minority received a permanent delegation to decide from those who knew less, this justification does not hold any more in the 21st. We believe that contemporary calls for **participatory democracy** are, in a large extent, rooted in this feeling among citizens that they are professionally and cognitively at least as competent as, and even more competent than, many decision-makers. We believe also that every

1 3.3% of Italians, 6.6% of French, 11.2% of Finns born in 1927 – 1936 have completed a tertiary education: OECD (2017), Population with tertiary education (indicator). doi: 10.1787/0b8f90e9-en (Accessed at <https://data.oecd.org/eduatt/population-with-tertiary-education.htm> on 16 May 2017)

2 25.5% of Italians, 44.7% of French, 40.5% of Finns, and 69% of Koreans born in 1981 – 1990 have completed a tertiary education: OECD (2017), Population with tertiary education (indicator). doi: 10.1787/0b8f90e9-en (Accessed at <https://data.oecd.org/eduatt/population-with-tertiary-education.htm> on 16 May 2017)



citizen has, in his/her professional life, in his/her studies or in his/her volunteer activities, accumulated a large capital of experience and observations, and also of theoretical insights. In these fields of experience and knowledge, the citizen is able to provide a valuable contribution to the technical content of debates on collective decisions. S/he is thereby in the intermediate and highly valuable position of a "professional", between those of the ignorant "man / woman in the street" and of the (often self-appointed and self-serving) "expert". This technical contribution is of course in addition to the participation in a discussion that any person is fully legitimate to take, because s/he feels that this discussion is important to his/her values or interests.

4 The CosmoPolitical Cooperative uses fair, efficient and transparent international communication tools

4.1 The CosmoPolitical Cooperative privileges written means of communication

Writing is an efficient, honest and egalitarian means of communication.

Writing is **efficient**. First, for the sake of **speed**. The number of words that can be read per unit of time lies in the 250 to 400 words/minute, whereas the figure for speaking lies at 120 to 150 words/minute. A two- to three-fold improvement. Second, for the sake of **reliability**. A written word can be checked over and again by the sender, before being finalised. It can also be read over and again by the reader, upon reception. These repeated checks and verifications are not possible in oral communication. Writing is thus faster and more reliable.

Writing is **honest** when deliberating. Deliberating and debating are a matter of exchanging arguments, in order for the protagonists, and for the spectators, to convince, and to be convinced. When arguments are conveyed on a technical means where the emitter has control over the speed of reception, in oral communication such as the telephone, audio or video streaming, s/he increases his/her capacity to manipulate his/her audience. "The show must go on", and the pace of discourse cannot be easily slowed, stopped or repeated. Fallacies and tweaked logical statements are difficult to detect in clever oral discourses. On the opposite, a written argument can be read at the speed that the receiver controls. The reader can also come back critically to obscure segments of the argument, and detect fallacies or misleading logical reasoning. Writing supports a higher level of honesty in deliberation.

Writing is more **egalitarian** when using a **foreign language**. The CosmoPolitical Cooperative will use only two international communication languages (see below). These languages will be foreign languages for the vast majority of our members – and this is normal. When using a foreign language, writing gives the time necessary to look for the adequate expression in a dictionary, even to translate from one's mother tongue, using all the linguistic resources available on-line. There is no penalty in the communication performance for being slow in writing, nor does one's accent play a role – whereas speaking too slowly or with too heavy a foreign accent challenges the patience of even the most caring listener. Reciprocally, reading a foreign language can be



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performed by taking all the time necessary, including to consult a dictionary or a grammar, with no penalty for reading slowly – whereas understanding speech slowly leads to missing most of the message. Writing compensates, at least partially, the differences in mastery of foreign languages, which is inevitable in a cooperative transcending linguistic barriers.

Writing is more **egalitarian** regarding the **time availability of people**. Writing is an asynchronous communication means. The reading of a text does not need to follow immediately its writing. Thereby, each person can choose the time best suited to his/her life and work constraints to reply in a discussion. Writing relieves the inequalities that arise because some people have more time available than others, and because different categories of people can have free time at different moments of the day, or of the week, or live in different time zones. Written communication respects better every person's life style.

Finally, writing is more **egalitarian** regarding **digital bandwidth**. The same amount of information is transmitted in one page of written text (3,300 characters, i.e. 3.3 kbytes) as in 4 minutes of speech (which, compressed as an audio file by a GSM mobile phone, uses ca. 2 kbytes/s, i.e. a total of 480 kbytes for 4 minutes; compressed as an MPEG4 video file, it uses ca. 25 kbytes/s, i.e. 6,000 kbytes for 4 minutes). The transmission of the same message needs 150 times more bandwidth when sent as an audio message (and 2,000 more when sent as a video message), as when sent in written form. This means that written communication uses far less network capacity than audio or video. It is much more compatible with the limited network resource that some users may encounter in their country or region. Written communication takes better care of regional / national inequalities regarding network quality and bandwidth.

For all these reasons, the CosmoPolitical Cooperative privileges written communication over audio or video.

4.2 The CosmoPolitical Cooperative uses, but not exclusively, technical and quantitative arguments

Science, figures and statistics often appear as being dry and boring. But they can be considered completely differently. They build a **universal language**: a language of concepts, symbols and figures in which the aspects of reality that matter for the discussion are described **concisely, efficiently and transparently**, and where causal relations are made apparent. Every human can have access to them, with no advantage given to any cultural or national background. The administration of proof can be performed along transparent and rational procedures. There is no such thing as the authority argument. Thereby, these means of exposing and explaining phenomena have a **universal, egalitarian and emancipatory** potential, across all language, cultural and economic boundaries. Using these tools contributes further to reducing the inequalities related to the differences in mastering the international communication languages used by the CosmoPolitical Cooperative.

This does not mean that the scientific, rational, quantitative mode of understanding reality exhausts the debate. **Sensitivity, values, beliefs and human feelings** are **fully legitimate** participants in a



political debate. In addition, a **critical eye** must be maintained on the nature of the **indicators**, on the methods to collect and to process data. Too many indicators whose relevance was taken for granted have been revealed to incorporate determinant implicit political and moral assumptions: the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measure of well-being is the most prominent recent example. The discussion on the nature and the usage of quantitative indicators and instruments is a fully legitimate political debate in itself.

More generally, the CosmoPolitical Cooperative is conscious that the boundaries between "technical" and "political" discussions are blurred. Any decision, even in the most technical environment, entails political values and societal choices. Any political intention needs to be translated into technical implementation to be effective, and to have a transformational capacity.

4.3 The CosmoPolitical Cooperative seeks fairness in the usage of international communication languages

A common language is the pre-requisite for political deliberation and decision-making to take place across linguistic boundaries.

As of 2018, the English language is one candidate to this status of an international communication language. The CosmoPolitical Cooperative uses **English** as **one of its official languages**.

We are aware of the **weaknesses** of this option:

- grammar knows few rules, but a large number of specific cases, making the learning of the language a matter of lengthy practice rather than of efficient understanding
- the grammatical function of words depends on the semantic context – but not on their form or their position in the sentence
- the correspondence between the written word and its pronunciation is loose, making spelling and written communication difficult
- words are short and the tonic accent is placed in variable locations, making confusions frequent in oral communication
- almost all vowels are diphthongs, a feature shared with very few other languages.

Learning English as a foreign language demands lengthy practice, and is thus **socially** and **geographically unfair**. Native speakers of Germanic and Nordic languages, people whose parents are rich enough to have them spend weeks to practice in total immersion as teen-agers in the highly lucrative business of English courses for foreigners, or to pay them studies in (predominantly private) Anglo-Saxon universities, have an advantage that others just cannot compete with.

The difficulties described are specific to English, make its learning particularly costly, and thus socially unfair – but any other natural language has its own difficulties (conjugation and mute vowels in French, declensions in Finnish and Polish, irregularities and exceptions in all...), and



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learning remains a challenge for anyone whose native language belongs to another linguistic family. Choosing another natural language than English as an official language of the CosmoPolitical Cooperative would thus not make things easier. Neither would the option of functioning with several national languages in parallel: this would fragment the CosmoPolitical Cooperative into parallel linguistic entities, and would remain unfair to the native speakers of the languages of lesser-populated communities.

The **language level** required for **political debating**, and to be able to convince others, is probably the **highest** one among the potential usages of a foreign language – on a par with commercial or legal negotiations. It is much more demanding than a discussion in a well-specified technical or scientific field, an everyday conversation on material issues, or tourism. This is why the CosmoPolitical Cooperative considers the issue of **linguistic fairness** as an important work to be undertaken, also internally.

This is also why the CosmoPolitical Cooperative considers the planned language **Esperanto**³ as its **second official language**. Esperanto was **designed** from inception as an **international communication language**, and is thus **ca. 10 times faster to learn** than any natural language. Forty (40) hours spent at learning Esperanto (i.e. a one-week intensive course, or 30 weekly sessions of 1.5 hours in a leisure environment) are the equivalent of 400 hours learning a natural language, enough to reach the B1 level (independent user) of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages⁴. Esperanto has a **completely regular grammar** (thereby placing learners in the natural situation of generalising what they know, rather than of being sanctioned for not knowing exceptions) and allows the creation of a large quantity of words by freely combining lexical roots and about forty affixes (thereby using memory with maximal efficiency: remembering one root is the equivalent of remembering ca. 10 words in a natural language). Free, on-line, multi-lingual courses exist for Esperanto⁵. As a matter of comparison, **English** could be considered as the expensive, less efficient equivalent of **proprietary software**, whereas **Esperanto** could be the low-cost, efficient, **Free, Libre and Open Source alternative**.

Automated translation tools between English and Esperanto exist⁶, and will be used extensively. Thereby, people unfamiliar with English will have the possibility to join the CosmoPolitical Cooperative fast and easily, and to contribute to the debate, by a fast learning of Esperanto.

5 The CosmoPolitical Cooperative is built around the only existing deliberative online democracy software, available under a Free, Libre and Open-Source licence

The CosmoPolitical Cooperative takes its decisions **fully on-line**. The design of the options between which to decide, or between which to allocate priority, and the decisions on the options or on the allocation of priority are made on-line and asynchronously only, in order to overcome

3 See a short and informative introduction to Esperanto at: <https://lernu.net/en/esperanto>

4 Accessible at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_en.pdf

5 e.g. at: <https://lernu.net/>

6 e.g. from English to Esperanto at: <https://gramtrans.com/languages>



inequalities in geographic location and in time availability.

The CosmoPolitical Cooperative starts its operations with the on-line democracy software called **KuneAgi**⁷. This software embodies all the democratic principles exposed above, and ensures that all members participate in decision-making, at the three key stages of (1) initiative, (2) amendment and (3) ranking in priority order or choice between options. It is the only available on-line democracy software that includes **deliberative** procedures between its members.

The KuneAgi software is a **Free, Libre and Open Source (FLOS) software**, available under the very demanding Affero GPL v.3 licence⁸. Thereby, the functions being actually performed by the software infrastructure can be checked by all, by investigating the source code. Not only the software, but also its specification is publicly available on the web site. Any person dissatisfied with the operation of the CosmoPolitical Cooperative can thus freely download the software⁹, and start operating his/her political cooperative, using the same technical tools.

6 The CosmoPolitical Cooperative protects itself from external economic power

6.1 The CosmoPolitical Cooperative operates frugally, to preserve its financial and political independence

Financial institutions, multi-national corporations, the rich and the immensely rich concentrate economic power. They transform this concentrated economic power into concentrated, and thereby un-democratic, political power, by making political institutions **financially dependent**. They bind public States and regional / local authorities with debt, they place the press in the straitjacket of advertising-based business models. They place prodigal political parties under the dependency of contributions in kind or in cash.

The CosmoPolitical Cooperative chooses **financial frugality** as a key means to preserve its financial, and thereby its political, **independence**. Concretely, this means that:

- the CosmoPolitical Cooperative's only financial resources come from the **contributions of its Cooperators**, from the **official support to political parties** (where it exists), and from the **sale of goods and services** produced by the CosmoPolitical Cooperative itself in the framework of its Social Entrepreneurship Activities;
- the economic model of the digital infrastructure supporting the CosmoPolitical Cooperative is a **low-priced subscription** (in the order of 0.1% of a median income), so that its operations have the **most broadly distributed financial base** (and depend neither on sponsors, nor on advertisers);
- **Physical gatherings of members have no decision-making powers**. Their sole purpose

⁷ Described at: <http://www.kuneagi.org/>

⁸ Full text of the licence available at: <https://www.gnu.org/licenses/agpl-3.0.en.html>

⁹ At the following link: <https://github.com/ecreall/nova-ideo>



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is to **stimulate discussion** and to **enhance cohesiveness**. Decisions are taken exclusively remotely, asynchronously, over telecommunication networks. Thereby, geographic equality among members is respected, and the costs of physical gatherings are minimised for the CosmoPolitical Cooperative.

6.2 The CosmoPolitical Cooperative is financially transparent

The CosmoPolitical Cooperative submits its accounts to **yearly external audit**, and **publishes its accounts on-line** as soon as they are established, and then when they are certified by the external auditors.

6.3 The CosmoPolitical Cooperative reduces its dependency to corporate-dominated and to emotional media

Media shape political life. Their format shapes that of political deliberation. Like any private firm, they place the interests of their paying customers and shareholders above those of the general public.

The dominating media are audio-visual (television or on-line videos) and privilege short written formats (Facebook, Twitter). Their business model is based on **advertising**, where the **paying customers** are the **corporations** purchasing advertising space, and the users are nothing more than the good being sold to these corporations.

Video content is prone to **manipulation**: image conveys much more emotions and judgement than what is made explicit; the streaming nature of video makes stopping the flow, coming back and reflection difficult. Fixed images only bear the first negative feature. Audio content only the second. These media formats are thus intrinsically contrary to deliberation.

In addition, these media are inefficient in conveying information, as mentioned above, making access to audio or video content over limited networks in poor or remote areas *de facto* impossible.

Short written formats aim at capturing **short-term attention** with strong emotions and striking formulas. They encourage the exchange of insults, support the expression of prejudice, and prevent any developed argument.

These features are opposite to the transparent, egalitarian and deliberative mode of democracy embodied in the CosmoPolitical Cooperative.

The CosmoPolitical Cooperative takes the following measures to limit its dependency towards the current, deliberation-suppressing, media:

- **video recordings are forbidden** in physical gatherings and in electoral meetings of the CosmoPolitical Cooperative. The CosmoPolitical Cooperative will engage in legal action against any breaches of this rule, under the right to preserve one's image (where this right exists).
- all members of the CosmoPolitical Cooperative **refuse video interviews**. Written



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interviews are preferred to audio interviews

- the broadcasting of the content of physical gatherings and of electoral meetings of the CosmoPolitical Cooperative is performed either by a combination of fixed photographs and of audio recordings, or by written reports
- all members of the CosmoPolitical Cooperative privilege interactions with **media** whose business model entails **broadly distributed sources of income**: minimising the fraction of advertising revenue, maximising the revenue based on a subscription or on a pay per use model
- the CosmoPolitical Cooperative will endeavour to create **its own advertising-free, on-line medium**. It will be based on a subscription or on a pay per use business model. It will give access to open, primary, reliable sources of information (official statistics and reports, scientific articles from peer-reviewed journals, reports from sources with identifiable sources of financing), and contain content provided by members, in parallel with content written by professional journalists under open-ended contracts.