The conference is intended for anyone interested in cooperatives and social and solidarity economy, in local and regional economic and social development, and in issues related to economic democracy - from academics to practitioners. Both presenters and non-presenters are welcome to attend.

The aim of the conference is to address issues related to the status and role of cooperatives and social enterprises in social and economic development in the V4 countries – Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland within a broader European context (South-Eastern and Western Europe) both from the point of view of a historical and theoretical reflection and from practical perspectives.

Although in the Visegrad countries cooperatives in the past played a significant role in socio-economic development especially at the local or sub-regional level, at present they are on the margins of interest despite the fact that they could encourage economic activities in the territories and economic sectors which are not within the scope of interest of strong economic actors. In the times of the economic crisis, cooperatives and other forms of social and solidarity economy may provide a model that secures sustainable employment and ensure more equitable future for those communities in which they operate or to whom they serve.

The Conference aims to:

• bring together academics, policy makers and practitioners to present research, discuss current knowledge and exchange experiences related to cooperative, social and solidarity economy and various forms of cooperative action
• promote networking among academics and practitioners and further build a community of experts and interested parties for ongoing collaboration, dialogue and research on cooperative, social and solidarity economy and various forms of cooperative action in Europe and beyond
Visions 4 a Cooperative Future: 
Cooperativism for the 21st Century 
Europe & Beyond

The conference will address, but is not limited to, these areas:

- the history of the cooperative movement and social and solidarity economy development and the current relevancy and standing of cooperatives in the economies of the V4 and other European countries
- the democratic and social dimension of cooperatives and their role in the social economy
- the impact of cooperatives and social economy actors on local/sub-regional economies
- the cooperative model in rural development
- the cooperative model for disadvantaged regions and communities
- social economy and social cooperatives – forms and linkages
- good practices in various forms of cooperative action
- factors hindering the development of the cooperative and social enterprise sector
- financing start-up and existing cooperatives
- legislative support for the development of cooperativism in the future
- public policies supporting the development of social economy and cooperativism in Europe
- educational programs in cooperativism and social economy

For further information about the Conference please write to: utopia@utopia.sk. To register for the Conference visit the Project INECON website: https://utopia.sk/liferay/web/inecon/home

Submission of papers: October 24, 2014
Notification of acceptance/rejection to presenters: November 3, 2014