



**European Cooperation
in the field of Scientific
and Technical Research
- COST -**

Brussels, 9 January 2009

Secretariat

COST 201/09

DRAFT SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Subject : 172nd meeting of the COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) held in
Brussels on 24 - 25 November 2008

The CSO President opened the meeting by welcoming the participants, in particular the new CSO members¹:

- Ms Lieve VAN DAELE, Belgium
- Ms Elena DINU, Romania and
- Mr Steve RINGER, the UK;

and the two invited participants:

- Professor Ian HALLIDAY, President ESF (item 8), and
- Professor Raoul KNEUCKER, Rapporteur (item 9).

¹ See complete list of participants in Annex I.

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Committee adopted the agenda as set out in CM 4076/08 of 7 November 2008 (agenda items in Annex II) with two items to be discussed under AOB:

- COST international cooperation
- Scientific papers published with support from COST

2. APPROVAL OF SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS OF THE 171st MEETING

The Committee approved the Summary of Conclusions of the previous meeting as set out in doc. COST 244/08 with one addition to the conclusions regarding item 7: "Preparation for the comprehensive impact study for the mid-term evaluation in 2010":

"The Committee noted that COST CSO should be represented in the High Level Expert Panel and agreed that Mr Stefan CAIREN (SE) would be appointed as a member of the Panel."

3. INFORMATION FROM THE CSO PRESIDENCY

The President informed the Committee of

- his meeting with the COST Office Science Officers on 23 June,
- his participation at the Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF) in Barcelona on 18 - 22 July, where COST had been presented through a Scientific session "Science and Preservation of Cultural Heritage", 3 COST Early Stage Researchers' workshops and an exhibition stand,
- his presentation "The Experience of COST" at the Annual Congress of the European Association of Nuclear Medicine (EANM) held on 11 - 15 October in Munich (DE),

- the meetings of the High Level Commission/COST Strategic Group on 24 June and 24 October²,
- the JAF meetings on 18 September and 4 - 5 November,

and his forthcoming presentations at:

- the 12th Annual Conference of European Society of Surgery on 27 - 29 November, Naples (IT) and
- the EUREKA High Level Group at the end of January 2009 in Portugal.

The Vice-President informed the Committee of

- his participation at the first Joint Strategic COST - ESF "Frontiers of Science" event "Water and Life" on 29 - 30 October in Taormina (IT), and
- his forthcoming attendance at the ESF Science Policy Conference "Global Challenges and the need for cooperation: Lessons learnt from Global Change" on 26 - 27 November in Stockholm (SE).

4. INFORMATION FROM

- delegations

The Swiss delegate informed the Committee of her attendance at the annual seminar organised by the Swisscore on 20 - 21 November in Brussels. The Director of the COST Office had given a presentation on COST and interventions from, *inter alia*, EUREKA and ESF had been included in the programme. She noted that in the presentations by the ESF there should be a clear distinction between COST as a mechanism and the ESF instruments.

² As established by the doc. COST 270/04.

- The Austrian delegate informed the Committee:
 - = that the former Austrian delegate to COST Action A2: "Migration - Europe's integration and the labour force - Brain Drain", Mr Rainer MÜNZ, had been appointed as a member of the Reflection Group established by the European Union to consider "Horizon 2020-2030";
 - = of the 2nd Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial meeting on Higher Education and Scientific Research planned for the second half of 2009 with a view to elaborate a Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education and Research Area, which could be a relevant initiative to be considered when discussing the COST strategy on international cooperation;
 - = that the Competitiveness Council on 1 - 2 December would conclude on issues with relevance also to COST, such as "2020 Vision for the European Research Area", "Towards Joint Programming in Research" and "European Partnership for International S&T Cooperation".
- The Danish delegate informed the Committee of his attendance at the meeting of the NATO Committee for Peace and Security last week, at which an enhanced cooperation with the European Union and the ESF had been highlighted.
- The COST Office:
 - distributed an overview on COST publications since the start of FP7 on 1 June 2007 until 3 November 2008. It was recalled that the list of publications is regularly uploaded to the COST Website: *<http://www.cost.esf.org/publications>*;
 - informed the Committee of the non-COST participation in COST Actions - currently 227 participations in 90 Actions from 29 countries - and of the recent contacts regarding possible enhanced cooperation between COST and countries such as South Africa, India, South Korea;

- informed the Committee that Action IS0702: "The Role of the EU in UN Human Rights Reform", approved by the CSO on 16 November 2007, has not yet been able to hold its first effective MC meeting. 8 countries have joined the Action, but only 3 attended the first meeting on 6 November 2008. The 5 countries that had not been present were requested to look into the matter with their national representatives³,

- informed the Committee of the COST Strategic Scientific Initiatives⁴:

= "COST Foresight 2030" that focuses on the effect of the digital revolution on the world beyond 2030; and

= the proposal for a strategic workshop "Principles and Development of Bio-inspired Materials", scheduled for 13-15 April 2010 in Vienna (AT)⁵.

Following the proposal by the Danish delegate, the Committee agreed to ask the COST Office to give an annual assessment to the CSO on the impact of the COST Strategic Scientific Initiatives.

- Commission

The Commission representative informed the Committee that an inter-service COST contact persons⁶ meeting is scheduled for 11 December 2008, with a presentation by the COST Office.

³ It is recalled that: "Actions that fail to start within twelve months of the date of approval of the MoU by the CSO due to lack of the minimum number of Parties, or because the first meeting of the MC has not been held within twelve months of the date of approval of the MoU by the CSO, will be referred back to the CSO for review." ("Rules and Procedures for implementing COST Actions", doc. COST 270/07, p.6).

⁴ Information note is available on the CSO website.

⁵ *After meeting note: JAF approved the proposal on 28 November 2008 by written procedure.*

⁶ "Towards a new partnership between COST and the Commission", doc. COST 270/04.

5. COST SEMINARS, COST OFFICE ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE EVENTS

The COST Office presented a document dated 21 November 2008 on COST Seminars and other activities supported by the COST Office.

6. COST GRANT AGREEMENT IN FP7: STATUS REPORT

The Committee was informed of the COST Grant agreement in FP7, the operations of which both the Commission representative and the COST Office estimated to be running smoothly. However, it was noted that the introduction of the COST Grant system (one of the deliverables of the contract) had been delayed and would need to be reported in the next periodic report to the Commission. It was recalled that the financial support to COST from the FP7 was implemented through annual amendments to the initial contract and that the current amendment would run until June 2009.

- Information on the audit of the COST contract in FP6

The Commission representative informed the Committee that the audit of the COST contract in FP6 was being carried out by the internal audit unit of DG Research and that the outcome was not yet available.

7. ACTION-RELATED ITEMS

a) Results of the 5th collection date (26 September 2008).

Schedule of the Assessment process

The COST Office presented the results of the 5th collection date (26 September 2008) and the schedule of the assessment process⁷. A shortlist of new proposals, following the evaluation procedure as set out in the COST guidelines, would be presented to the CSO in May 2009 for approval. The Committee was informed of the increasing number of Trans-domain proposals (81 out of 378). It was observed that, in accordance with the COST Guidelines, each preliminary proposal needs a minimum of six assessments, which threshold seems to have been more difficult to reach in the case of the TDP proposals.

The Committee highlighted the importance of multidisciplinary and the important role that COST could play in this respect. The Committee recognised the necessity to closely monitor the situation with respect to the TDPs, including particular attention to their assessment and allocation of assessors for the TDP proposals.

b) JAF decisions on the requests for extension or prolongation of COST Actions

The Committee took note of the decision by the JAF Group, at its meeting on 4 - 5 November 2008, to approve the requests for extension or prolongation of COST Actions, as set out in doc. COST 246/08.

Furthermore the Committee approved the JAF recommendation regarding the application of the European Forest Institute (EFI) to be eligible for reimbursement at least for one participant twice a year to attend meetings of Action FP0703, to be covered from the Action's budget.

⁷ The presentation has been made available on the CSO website.

c) JAF decisions on the requests for participation of institutions from non-COST countries

The Committee took note of the decision by the JAF Group, at its meeting on 4 - 5 November 2008, to approve the requests for participation of institutions from non-COST countries as set out in doc. COST 246/08.

The President recalled that he had been invited to the EUREKA High Level Group meeting at the end of January 2009 to give a presentation on the COST experience on cooperation with third countries (see also item 19: AOB).

d) Status of the COST Grant system

The COST Office gave a presentation⁸ of the COST Grant System and the results of the first α -test by COST Actions 541 and IC0701. A complete migration table was presented to the Committee, with the estimate that all Actions would run under the Grant system by the end of 2010.

8. COST-ESF RELATIONSHIP

The President recalled his letter on behalf of the Committee to the ESF President to ask whether the ESF would be willing to continue to act as the implementing agent for COST after the end of the 7th FP under the same conditions agreed in FP7, and to agree that from the end of FP7 COST would focus on research networking and ESF on programmes (e.g. EUROCORES) in order to further improve COST - ESF synergies. In the "Statement by the ESF President" dated 2 November 2008 the intention of the ESF to act as the implementing agent for COST for the entire duration of FP7 was confirmed, whilst no explicit position was indicated as to whether the ESF would be willing to continue under the same conditions agreed in FP7 for the period after FP7.

⁸ The presentation has been made available on the CSO website.

Professor Ian HALLIDAY, the ESF President, gave an address to the Committee regarding the cooperation between COST and ESF. As to the period after FP7 he stated the willingness of the ESF to enter into a dialogue to discuss the cooperation and, where appropriate, possible improvements to enhance synergy.

During the ensuing exchange of views delegations stressed the necessity to clarify the position of the ESF Member Organisations vis-à-vis the continuation of the ESF as a service provider to COST after FP7. Several delegations welcomed the proposal to convene a meeting of the High Level Group COST - ESF (including participants from both the CSO and the ESF Governing Council) to look into the cooperation. Also the Commission representative supported the initiative to further examine ways to reinforce synergy between COST and the ESF.

At the end of the discussion the Committee agreed⁹:

- to invite the COST CSO President to pursue the examination of the COST-ESF relationship in the context of the COST-ESF High Level Group which should meet as soon as possible;
- to ask the COST CSO President to agree with the ESF that two COST CSO members (to be nominated by the COST CSO President¹⁰) and two members of the ESF Governing Council participate in such a meeting and that the European Commission be also represented;
- to ask the COST CSO President to report to the COST JAF/CSO on the results of the COST-ESF High Level Group by 15 April 2009 at the latest; and
- to invite the members of the COST CSO to inform the ESF member organisations from their countries of the decisions of the COST CSO on this matter.

⁹ The final version of which is set out in doc. COST 280/08.

¹⁰ The two previous CSO Vice-Presidents: Dr Eva Klaper (CH) and Mr Stefan Cairén (SE) have been appointed by the CSO President.

9. LEGAL STATUS AND GOVERNANCE OF COST

The President recalled the background for the CSO decision to re-examine the legal status and governance of COST, in particular as a follow-up to the Monfret Report¹¹. The JAF Group, at its meetings on 18 September and 4 - 5 November 2008, had prepared a set of draft documents¹² on different solutions to facilitate the choice of the option for the legal status and governance of COST after FP7. It was recalled that the CSO was asked to take a decision between the options, but that the draft documents were not expected to be approved at this meeting.

The President asked all delegations to indicate their first orientations¹³ regarding the question. Of those delegations that were absent, 5 had submitted their indicative vote in writing to the COST Secretariat prior to the meeting.

The Commission representative stated that the Commission has looked seriously into the Kneucker report and has taken a position on the recommendations and certain aspects of the report. The Commission would clearly prefer the *status quo* model, with improvements to COST governance, as had been referred to in the Kneucker report. If the current arrangements are functioning well, there is no reason to change them. However, the Commission could live as well with the second alternative - COST with own legal status. However, this would require a decision of the member countries. In this context the Commission representative clarified that the Monfret report prepared by independent experts is of advisory nature to the Commission.

¹¹ Report by the the High Level Panel: "Final Review of COST in the 6th Framework Programme"

¹² Documents have been made available to delegations on the CSO website.

¹³ The list of indicative preferences of Member States is given in Annex III.

(Continuation on the agenda item on the 2nd meeting day.)

The Committee agreed that as several delegations were in favour of postponing the decision until results from the High Level Group on the cooperation between COST and the ESF would be available (see item 8), the question on the future legal status and governance would be deferred to one of the next CSO meetings in 2009. The President noted that a vote on this issue will be taken by qualified majority in accordance with the CSO Working Methods, if consensus cannot be obtained.

10. COST MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE 2009

The President recalled the invitation by Professor GAGO, the Portuguese Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education, to host a COST Ministerial Conference (MC) in Portugal in July or September 2009.

The Committee noted that the question of the legal status and governance of COST would be one of the key issues envisaged for the agenda of the COST MC, without excluding other strategic issues relevant for COST in the constantly evolving European Research Area. In this regard, the Committee concluded that, as further preparatory work would be needed, a COST MC in 2009 was not feasible any more. Consequently, the Committee asked the President to send a letter to Professor GAGO to convey the appreciation of the Committee towards his kind invitation, and to explain why under the current circumstances a COST MC in 2009 was not feasible. The Committee was of the opinion that a COST MC could be held during the first semester of 2010 and asked the Spanish delegation to inquire whether the Conference could be held on the occasion of a Competitiveness Council meeting under the Spanish EU Presidency.

11. LETTER OF ISCH: PROPOSAL FOR A REVISION OF THE COST GUIDELINES

The Committee took note of the letter from the Chair of the DC Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health (ISCH) written on behalf of DC ISCH, with comments on the three completed evaluation rounds under the COST Open Call system and a proposal to the CSO to review the COST Guidelines.

The Committee noted

- that the Guidelines had been revised by the CSO in February 2007 and subsequently in March 2008, and both revisions had been the result of the activities of the two "ad hoc" Working Group Guidelines (WGG) appointed by the CSO, with both DC Chairs and CSO members appointed as members;
- that the last version of the Guidelines (doc. COST 205/08) that had been approved "by consensus" in the WGG had been published and widely distributed;
- that a too frequent revision of the Guidelines was not deemed appropriate by the CSO, and
- that all DCs should be consulted with a view of further improving the Guidelines and that a general discussion on the COST Guidelines would be needed.

The Committee decided:

- to establish a new Working Group Guidelines (WGG) with the mandate of proposing to JAF/CSO a revision of the Guidelines¹⁴ to be approved by the CSO at its meeting in March 2010. The WGG will start its activities in February 2009, will be composed of 3 COST DC Chairs and 3 CSO members nominated by the CSO President, will be chaired by the COST CSO Vice-President, will be assisted by the COST Secretariat and the COST Office and will work primarily through e-mail. If the WGG finds it necessary to have a meeting, the meeting will be convened by the COST CSO Vice-President through the COST Office, possibly on the occasion of other meetings where DC Chairs are present. The COST CSO Vice-President will chair the meeting. The meetings will normally be held at the COST Office in Brussels. Travel expenses of the WGG members will be reimbursed by the COST Office;

¹⁴ Doc. COST 205/08

- to ask the other COST DC Chairs to send their comments and proposals to the COST CSO Vice President (copy to the other DC Chairs, to the COST Secretariat and to the COST Office) by the end of May 2009 at the latest;
- to invite the COST DC Chairs to actively participate in a Workshop to be held during the CSO meeting in May 2009 and entitled "COST Guidelines: a necessary scientific procedure or an excess of bureaucracy?";
- to invite the COST Office to present during the above Workshop a report on the procedures adopted by the European Science Foundation (ESF) for the assessment, monitoring and final evaluation of ESF research activities; and
- to invite the European Commission to present during the above Workshop the procedures adopted in 7th RTD Framework Programme for the selection of the proposals.

The Committee asked the COST Office to distribute the CSO decision¹⁵ to all members of the COST Domain Committees.

12. APPROVAL OF NEW COST ACTIONS

The COST Office gave a presentation¹⁶ of the 30 proposals for new COST Actions that were recommended by the JAF Group for the approval by the Committee as set out in doc. COST 247/1/08 REV 1. A booklet illustrating each Action was circulated to delegations at the meeting. A summary of the estimated economic impact of the new Actions was also presented to the Committee¹⁷.

The Committee approved the 30 new COST Actions, for which the Final Memoranda of Understanding would be issued soon after the meeting

¹⁵ The decision as set out in doc. COST 281/08, with the DC ISCH letter as an annex.

¹⁶ The presentation has been made available on the CSO website.

¹⁷ This information will in the future be included in the booklet on Actions.

13. DRAFT DECLARATION FOR THE COST MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

(Not discussed, cf. item 10.)

14. FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee examined the list of future meetings as set out in doc. COST 202/4/08 REV 4. The next CSO meeting is scheduled for 17 - 18 March 2009 in Berlin (DE).

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- COST international cooperation

The Swedish delegation welcomed the continued and still developing co-operation between COST and EUREKA at all levels. However, with regard to the President's participation in the EUREKA HLG meeting in January 2009 and with regard to membership questions, he drew the Committee's attention to the new approach of the EUREKA Presidency and its expressed intention to invite South Korea as "associated member" of EUREKA at the EUREKA Ministerial Conference in June 2009.

The President noted that his presentation to EUREKA at the end of January 2009 would focus on the participation of non-COST institutions in COST Actions and on the COST strategy for cooperation with institutions from non-COST countries as set out in doc. COST 229/07. The Committee recalled that the strategy was foreseen to be reviewed at the CSO meeting in May 2009. In this context it was noted that the pilot schemes with Australia and New Zealand would end in July 2008, and a report would be given to the CSO at its meeting in December 2009.

- Scientific papers published with support from COST

The Turkish delegate raised the question that scientific papers that had been published with support from COST should acknowledge COST in the publications. The Committee asked the COST Office to further encourage such acknowledgments and to provide a standard statement in this respect that could be suggested to Action Management Committees to be used in such publications.

List of participants¹

<u>PRESIDENT</u>	:	Mr Francesco FEDI
<u>VICE-PRESIDENT</u>	:	Mr John BARTZIS
<u>AUSTRIA (AT)</u>	:	Ms Helga MIELING Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology
<u>BELGIUM (BE)</u>	:	Mr Hendrik MONARD Federal Science Policy Ms Lieve VAN DAELE Federal Science Policy
<u>BULGARIA (BG)</u>	:	-
<u>CROATIA (HR)</u>	:	Mr Bozidar BIONDIC University of Zagreb Mr Damir JELICIC Ministry of Science
<u>CYPRUS (CY)</u>	:	Ms Constantina MAKRI Research Promotion Foundation
<u>CZECH REPUBLIC (CZ)</u>	:	Mr Milos CHVOJKA Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport Mr Jaroslav CIHLAR Technical University of Brno Mr Bedrich PEKAREK Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
<u>DENMARK (DK)</u>	:	Mr Gorm BRAMSNAES Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation
<u>ESTONIA (EE)</u>	:	-

¹ Regrets had been received from the delegations of Bulgaria, Estonia, fYR of Macedonia, Iceland, Israel and the Netherlands.

FINLAND (FI) : Mr Raimo PULKKINEN
TEKES

fYR of MACEDONIA (MK) : -

FRANCE (FR) : Mr Michel GORLICKI
Ministry of Higher Education and Research

GERMANY (DE) : Mr René HAAK
Federal Ministry for Education and Research

Ms Julia KIPPER-ALBERTINI
EUREKA-COST Bureau

GREECE (EL) : Ms Laura ALIPRANTI
General Secretariat for Research and Technology

HUNGARY (HU) : Ms Orsolya TOTH
National Office for Research and Technology

ICELAND (IS) : -

IRELAND (IE) : Ms Rita WARD
Enterprise Ireland

ISRAEL (IL) : -

ITALY (IT) : Ms Maria UCCELLATORE
MIUR

LATVIA (LV) : Ms Maja BUNDULE
Ministry of Education and Science

LITHUANIA (LT) : Ms Birute BUKAUSKAITE
Agency of International Science and Technology
Development Programmes

LUXEMBOURG (LU) : Mr Carlo DUPREL
Ministry of Research

MALTA (MT) : -

NETHERLANDS (NL) : -

NORWAY (NO) : Ms Trude DYPVIK
The Research Council of Norway

- POLAND (PL)** : Mr Marek ZDANOWSKI
Ministry of Science and Higher Education
- PORTUGAL (PT)** : Ms Fernanda SOUTO SEPULVEDA
Foundation for Science and Technology FCT
- ROMANIA (RO)** : Ms Cristina ANANIA
Ministry of Education, Research and Youth
- Ms Elena DINU
Ministry of Education, Research and Youth
- SERBIA (RS)** : Ms Biljana STOJANOVIC
University of Belgrade
- SLOVAKIA (SK)** : Mr Ladislav HUDEC
Slovak University of Technology
- SLOVENIA (SI)** : Mr Primoz PRISTOVSEK
Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology
- Ms Dagmar SZILAGYI
Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology
- SPAIN (ES)** : Ms Ángeles RODRIGUEZ PEÑA
Ministry of Education and Science
- SWEDEN (SE)** : Ms Birgitta BOMAN
VINNOVA
- Mr Stefan CAIREN
Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications
- SWITZERLAND (CH)** : Mr Balz ABPLANALP
Swiss Mission to the EU
- Ms Eva KLAPER
SER
- TURKEY (TU)** : Mr Omer CEBECI
The Scientific and Technological Research Council
of Turkey
- UNITED KINGDOM (UK)** : Mr Steve RINGER
Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills
- Mr Chris REILLY
Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills

COMMISSION, DG Research : Mr Robert- Jan SMITS
Mr Markku WARRAS
Mr Jan-Arne EILERTSEN

COST OFFICE : Mr Martin GRABERT
Mr Afonso FERREIRA
Ms Magali POINOT

COUNCIL SECRETARIAT : Mr Kimmo PEIPPO
Ms Ulla MESIÄ

AGENDA

24 November

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Approval of Summary of Conclusions of the previous meeting
3. Information from the CSO Presidency
4. Information from
 - delegations
 - COST Office (including strategic workshops)
 - COST Secretariat
 - Commission
5. COST Seminars, COST Office activities and future events
6. COST Grant Agreement in FP7: status report
Information on audit of the COST contract in FP6
7. Action-related items
 - a) Results of the 5th collection date (26 September 2008). Schedule of the assessment process.
 - b) JAF decisions on the requests for extension or prolongation of COST Actions
 - c) JAF decisions on the requests for participation of institutions from non-COST countries
 - d) Status of the COST Grant system
8. COST-ESF relationship
9. Legal Status and Governance of COST
10. COST Ministerial Conference 2009
11. Letter of DC ISCH: Proposal for a revision of the COST Guidelines

25 November

12. Approval of new COST Actions
 9. *(Cont'd) Legal Status and Governance of COST*
 13. Draft Declaration for the COST Ministerial Conference
 14. Future meetings
 15. Any other business
-

Tentative orientations by Member States (in the order of priority)

(1) COST Office Association:

Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, FYR of Macedonia, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Turkey, (Israel¹⁹)

(1) Postpone decision²⁰ - (2) COST Office Association:

Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Luxembourg, Sweden, Switzerland

(1) COST Association - (2) COST Office Association - (3) Status quo:

Finland

(1) Status quo - (2) COST Office Association:

Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Slovenia, Portugal

(1) Postpone decision - (2) Status quo - (3) COST Office Association:

Norway

(1) Postpone decision - (2) Status quo:

United Kingdom, the Netherlands

(1) Status quo:

Austria, Poland

¹⁹ Co-operating State with no voting right.

²⁰ To postpone is interpreted as "no decision to be taken at the 172nd CSO meeting."