



Brussels, 20 May 2015

## COST Association Statement

The COST Association, representing 36 COST Member Countries<sup>1</sup>, is expressing its great concern regarding the necessity to have stable legal and financial frame conditions, matching with all COST activities, allowing the smooth operation of the COST Framework for the entire period of Horizon 2020 as agreed in the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) signed with the European Commission in July 2014.

The contribution of the Horizon 2020 research and innovation budget to the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) is distributed unevenly to its different programmes and other beneficiaries. The budget<sup>2</sup> proposed for COST for 2017 indicates a reduction of 7% that might be higher in the next coming years. If the EFSI related budget cuts were confirmed, it would have important and wide-ranging consequences on COST Actions and on delivering on the COST specific objectives.

The COST Member Countries' joint statement underlines the importance of COST as an efficient framework in funding networking of all types of participants achieving relevant outputs - from breakthrough research findings to the improvement of Europe's competitiveness by creating better conditions (technology delivery, norms, standards, legislation). Thanks to its bottom-up, interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches, COST is a unique programme within the European Research Area, with no counterpart in Horizon 2020. As a stakeholder of the European Research Area, the COST Association is proud of the following achievements:

- **COST Actions** are suitable for new and emerging science and technology fields and for **building bridges** between disciplines and research communities; they **distribute the knowledge** produced to key stakeholders, including industry, in particular SMEs.
- **COST Actions are a very effective mechanism to deliver excellence and capacity building with outstanding outputs** such as successful cooperative project spin-offs, key inputs in the European and National legislations, strong economic impact for sectors and regions not covered by the wider or more ambitious EU initiatives.

<sup>1</sup> COST Member Countries: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. COST Cooperating State: Israel

<sup>2</sup> COST has traditionally drawn its funding from the EU's Framework programmes, sole common pot in the EU, at the request of the EU Member States and with the approval of the European Parliament. The COST indicative budget in Horizon 2020 is drawn from two different parts of the Horizon 2020, namely Europe in a changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective Societies and Spreading Excellence and widening and amounts to EURO 300 Million (constant prices).





- **COST represents high value for money with a strong leverage effect:** for each EUR 1 invested by COST, EUR 23 leveraged at national level (as stated in the “Final Review Report of the FP7 COST II Grant Agreement”). As a result, the COST mechanism is in line with the ESFI, which aims at leveraging public/private investments by using public funds in order to boost and increase competitiveness in Europe.
- Widely recognized, high-value of networking activities that contribute significantly to delivering the Europe 2020 Agenda and the Innovation Union goals, and in particular to the Widening objectives through **COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy**.

The COST Association stands by the European Commission’s efforts to support Europe’s competitiveness, its growth and job creation. It believes that most of those objectives will be reached by strongly supporting knowledge creation and knowledge sharing. This is the aim of more than 340 running COST Actions bringing together over 45.000 researchers, engineers and scholars, from academia and industry. They are advancing European research and innovation through excellent S&T networks.

Accordingly, it is a strong European interest to preserve this unique research and technology-based networking instrument with no budget cuts as currently proposed in context of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI).

