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

Secretariat

Brussels, 10 April 2008

COST 209/08

DRAFT SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Subject : 170th meeting of the COST Senior Officials Committee (CSO) held in Athens, Greece, on 12 - 13 March 2008

The welcome address was given by Mr Christos VASILAKOS on behalf of the Secretary-General of the General Secretariat for Research and Technology in Greece.

The CSO President opened the meeting[1] by welcoming the participants[2], in particular the CSO members attending for the first time:

- Mr Florian HAUG, Austria,
- Mr Raimo PULKKINEN, Finland, and
- Ms Katerina GALANOU, Greece.

[1] Objections were noted from the FR and DE delegations that the meeting was held without interpretation.
[2] See complete list of participants in Annex I.

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Committee adopted the agenda as set out in CM 636/08 of 14 February 2008 (agenda items in Annex II) and agreed to add "COST Strategic workshops" under Any Other Business.

2. APPROVAL OF SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS OF THE 169th MEETING

The Committee approved the Summary of Conclusions of the previous meeting as set out in doc. COST 269/07.

3. RE-EXAMINATION OF THE LEGAL STATUS AND GOVERNANCE OF COST

Professor Raoul Kneucker, the Rapporteur, gave a status report to the Committee on the re-examination of the legal status and governance of COST[3]. Written input had been provided by some delegations to the Rapporteur. He had met with the Commission services and the Council Secretariat and meetings with the President of the CSO and the CEO of the ESF had also taken place. The Rapporteur presented a set of questions that delegations could reflect upon and provide their response[4].

The President concluded that a preliminary report would be presented to the JAF in May and the CSO in June 2008 by the Rapporteur.

4. INFORMATION FROM THE CSO PRESIDENCY

The President informed the Committee of his participation[5] at the:

- "Assises Nationales de la Recherche" on 19-20 November 2007 in Tunis,
- the ESF Assembly on 28 November 2007 in Strasbourg,
- the Science Policy Conference *"Is the ERA a first step to GLOREA (Global Research Area)?"* organised by the ESF in Strasbourg on 28-29 November 2007,

[3] As decided by the CSO, doc. COST 240/07
[4] A note from the Rapporteur has been sent by e-mail to all delegations on 26 March 2008, asking for their response by 30 April 2008.
[5] Detailed information can be found on the website: http://www.cost.esf.org/index.php.

- meetings in India in December 2007 and January 2008 organised by the Indian Embassy in Italy under the "Distinguished Visitors Programme" of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), and
- COST Day on 5 March 2008, in Skopje.

Furthermore, the President informed the Committee of:

- the 2nd meeting of the High Level Group COST - ESF[6] that had taken place on 12 February 2008 in Brussels,
- and the forthcoming events:
  = the COST participation in the *"EU Research information event"* in Tirana on 6 May 2008, organised by the Commission to mark the association of Albania to the 7th RTD Framework Programme (CSO Vice-President to attend on behalf of the CSO President), and
  = the planned COST Days in various venues in Israel in May 2008.

The Committee was informed that the question of the possible COST Ministerial Conference during the Swedish EU Presidency in 2009 was still under consideration by the Swedish Ministry. The issue would be closely followed by the President and the Swedish delegation and the CSO would be informed accordingly.

5. INFORMATION ITEMS:

- Delegations

- The Austrian delegate, drawing attention to the COST Strategic workshops, informed the Committee of
  = her participation at the Strategic Workshop "Meeting the Needs of Gifted Children and Adolescents - Towards a European Roadmap" in Brussels on 27 November 2007, and
  = the forthcoming Strategic Workshop "Global Change and Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions" (Innsbruck, 7 - 9 April 2008), involving several COST domains, such as ESSEM, FA, FPS, ISCH, TUD.

[6] Established by the Addendum to the MoU between COST and the ESF, doc. COST 291/06

- The Swiss delegate reported to the Committee of the final conference of COST 219ter: "Accessibility for all to services and terminals for next generation networks" that had taken place on 7 February 2008 with more than 150 participants representing a wide range of stakeholders. She noted that this Action could be considered as one of the precursors for the Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) Programme that is expected to be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in May 2008.

- The Finnish delegate informed the Committee of the visit of the ESF CEO to Academy of Finland and TEKES (Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation) in the context of looking into the existing collaboration between COST and the ESF.

- The Serbian delegate informed the Committee that the Ministry for Science in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA) had expressed interest to examine possibilities for membership in COST. Information on the formal procedure had been provided and BA had been encouraged to consider how to enhance their participation in running Actions.

- The COST Office

The COST Office informed the Committee of
- the future COST Seminars, Strategic Workshops and other events[7], and
- the budgetary situation until 31 December 2007 and a forecast and provisional budget for 2008[8].

- The COST Secretariat

The Committee was informed that the new procedure of acceptance of Memoranda of Understanding by Member States, as approved at the 169th CSO meeting, had been successfully applied and all but one of the 25 new Actions approved by the CSO in November 2007 had entered into force[9].

[7] A note dated 27 February 2008 had been made available to delegations prior to the meeting. In addition to the listed events, it was noted that a COST Seminar with a presentation by the Commission on International RTD Cooperation was foreseen in May 2008.
[8] A room paper dated 29 February 2008 was made available to delegations.
[9] A room document with the dates of entry into force was made available to delegations.

6. ACTION-RELATED ITEMS

(a) Results of the third collection date of the Open Call

The COST Office gave a presentation on the results of the 3rd collection date (30 September 2008) of the Open Call[10]. A draft list of recommended proposals will be available end of April. JAF will examine the list on 14-15 May 2008 with a view to the final approval at the CSO meeting on 18-19 June 2008.

In this context the COST Office anticipated that the budgetary situation would allow up to 30 proposals to be recommended to the CSO from the 4th collection date (28 March 2008).

(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 13-14 February 2008, to approve the request of COST 634 for a 3-month extension with no financial implication.

(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 13-14 February 2008, to approve the requests for participation of institutions from non-COST countries as set out in Annex III.

(d) Status of the COST Grant system

The COST Office gave a presentation on the new *e*-COST nomination tool and said that it should be fully operational in April 2008.

The Committee was informed that the introduction of the COST Grant system would be delayed from the original estimate to have it operational in March 2008. Questions related to IT issues had been discussed by the CSO President and the ESF CEO.

[10] The presentation is available to delegations on the CSO website.

7. STATUS OF THE FINAL EVALUATION AND PROGRESS REPORTS OF COST ACTIONS AND COST WEBSITE

The COST Office had made available statistics[11] regarding the situation of the Final evaluation and progress reports of Actions that had ended between June 2006 and March 2008. The situation related to some missing reports was brought to the Committee's attention.

The Committee requested that, should there be any matter that requires follow-up at national level with the DC/MC representatives; the COST Office would inform the relevant CNC(s) at the earliest possible stage.

8. ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUP GUIDELINES

The CSO Vice-President, who had chaired the Working Group Guidelines (WGG),[12] informed the Committee that the WGG, at its meeting on 1 February 2008, had reached consensus on the draft revised Guidelines. The draft had been discussed by the JAF Group on 13-14 February 2008 and a proposal would be presented to the CSO for approval at this meeting under item 10. The Vice-President noted that, after the CSO approval of the Guidelines, the WGG would have fulfilled its mandate and could be disbanded.

9. OPEN CALLS

(a) Number of yearly collection dates

Referring to the discussions at the previous CSO meeting in November 2007 the President recalled that the COST Guidelines, doc. COST 203/07, as approved by the CSO, referred to "normally two collection dates a year".

[11] The documents are available for delegations on the CSO website.
[12] The mandate of the WGG is set out in doc. COST 228/07.

The President noted that a proposal had been made to the Committee to change the current system to one annual Collection date. The President asked delegations to indicate their position on the proposal by raising their hand[13].

As a result, the President concluded that the proposal had not reached the required majority under Article 8 of the CSO Working Methods[14] and therefore the current system of normally two annual collection dates would be maintained.

(b) Next Collection dates

The Committee agreed to the next Collection dates to be announced as follows:
26 September 2008,
27 March 2009,
25 September 2009 and
26 March 2010.

10. REVISION OF THE GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS OF COST ACTIONS

The Committee

- approved the revised draft Guidelines as proposed by the JAF Group in its note of 21 February 2008, with one amendment[15],

- concluded that the WGG had fulfilled its mandate and therefore the Group was by this decision disbanded, and

- agreed to review the Guidelines in due course in the light of further experience gained from the next Collection dates.

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13 Three delegations had indicated their position in advance to the Secretariat.
14 Doc. COST 326/05
15 Page 5, 4th bullet point: "DC members should not ~~take part in proposing new Actions~~ be one of the proposers of a new Action."
The final version is set out in doc. COST 205/08.

The President noted that the Guidelines were the result of a careful common effort of the entire COST community to fix a rigorous procedure for:

- the establishment of rules for avoiding conflicts of interest, for introducing a COST code of conduct and for adding further to the objectivity and transparency of the whole assessment, monitoring and evaluation process;

- the assessment of proposals for new Actions, including the criteria followed in the assessment through peer reviews by the assessors and the templates to be used by the Proposers for the preparation of Preliminary Proposals and Full Proposals;

- the Monitoring of Actions in progress, including the template for the preparation of the Progress Reports;

- the Final Evaluation through peer reviews of completed Actions, including the template for the preparation of the Final Evaluation Report and;

- the Dissemination and Exploitation of the results obtained in COST Actions.

The COST Office was invited to prepare a printed publication with the text of the Guidelines, also to be available on the COST website[16]. The President invited delegations to give due publicity to the Guidelines vis-à-vis relevant stakeholders.

11. PROCEDURES FOR THE PRESENTATION OF MOU TO CSO

The Committee approved the proposal regarding the procedures for the presentation of MoU to the CSO as set out in doc. COST 203/08.

[16] Delegations should inform the COST Office how many copies of the publication they wish to receive.

12. "COST AND ESF SYNERGY: NEW IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE"

The CEO of the ESF, Professor Marja MAKAROW[17], gave a presentation to the Committee entitled "COST and ESF Synergy: New ideas for the future"[18]. The presentation was followed by an exchange of views with delegations. The President thanked Professor Makarow for her excellent presentation, and looked forward to a fruitful cooperation (see also item 17).

13. COST FUND

(a) Statement of revenue and expenditure as at the end of the financial year 2007

The CSO endorsed the recommendation by the auditors, Mr Jaroslav CIHLAR (CZ) and Ms Helga MIELING (AT), to give discharge to the Secretariat for the financial year 2007 based on the Statement as set out in doc. COST 201/08 and the audit carried out on 11 January 2008, and took note of the draft estimates of expenditure and revenue for 2008.

(b) Designation of auditors for the COST Fund for 2008

The Committee appointed Mr Jaroslav CIHLAR (CZ) and Ms Helga MIELING (AT) to continue as auditors of the COST Fund during the financial year 2008.

(c) Next Calls for Funds

The Committee took note of the indicative outline for expenses for the coming years as presented by the Secretariat in a note dated 25 February 2008, and agreed to the following timetable of launching future Calls for Funds:

- 2nd Call to be launched in 2008, payments by 06/2009
- 3rd Call to be launched in 2009, payments by 06/2010
- 4th Call to be launched in 2010, payments by 06/2011

[17] For CV: http://www.esf.org/fileadmin/be_user/Communications/Marja%20CV%20J.pdf
[18] The presentation is available for delegations on the CSO website.

It was noted that most COST countries had already paid their full contribution to the 5th COST Fund. The Secretariat was invited to carry out the Calls as agreed above and to contact delegations concerned for payment modalities.

14. COST OUTREACH STRATEGY

The Committee approved the COST Outreach Strategy as set out in doc. COST 207/08.

15. PREPARATION FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE IMPACT STUDY FOR THE MID-TERM EVALUATION IN 2010

The COST Office recalled that the High Level Panel for the Final Review of COST in the FP6 had recommended that COST should launch a comprehensive impact study, on which the FP7 Mid-Term Evaluation in 2010 could rely on. The Committee was informed that a High Level Panel had been appointed to discuss the methodological approach, in particular, relevant indicators and the project requirements in depth. The composition of the Panel was presented to the Committee in a note by the COST Office. The first meeting of the Panel, with representatives from the COST Office and the Commission, had been held on 28 January 2008.

As to the follow-up of the study launched by the COST Office in 2006 "Potential impact of COST within the Lisbon process and on the development of the ERA", the COST Office confirmed that the findings of the previous study would be used as a basis for the Impact Study.

In this context attention was drawn to the Special Report (SR) by the European Court of Auditors "Evaluating the EU RTD FPs - could the Commission's approach be improved?" that was currently being discussed with a view to Conclusions by the Competitiveness Council on the SR. The COST Office was asked to ensure that this would be taken into account also in preparation of the COST Study.

It was noted that the CSO should be duly involved in the process. The President concluded by inviting the COST Office to report on the developments to the JAF in May and the CSO in June.

16. STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE COST OFFICE AND THE CSO

The COST Office informed the Committee of the substantial reorganisation of the COST website that is currently being carried out. New features to ensure better communication with the CNCs are being developed, such as automatic alerts on web updates. The COST Office invited delegations to give feedback on the website with a view to further developments.

During the discussion the potential of mutual support between the COST Office and the CNCs was highlighted. It was concluded that ongoing exchanges on the issue would continue with a view to discussion at the next JAF meeting on 14-15 May 2008 on the basis of a document prepared by the COST Office.

17. COST-ESF SYNERGY

The Committee was informed that the High Level Group COST - ESF, at its meeting on 12 February 2008, had identified the "Food Systems in Europe" as the first topic for a joint COST - ESF Workshop on "Frontiers of Science" and agreed to start planning for the event.

Furthermore, the COST Day organised at the European Parliament in 2006 could be a useful format for the COST-ESF Scientific Days, possibly in 2009, to highlight achievements to policy-makers.

18. FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee agreed to the following schedule of meetings in 2008:

14 - 15 May	JAF	Brussels (BE)
18 - 19 June	171st CSO	Belgrade (RS)
4 - 5 November	JAF	Brussels (BE)
24 - 25 November	172nd CSO	Brussels (BE)

The Serbian delegation informed the Committee of the preparation for the meeting in Belgrade. Relevant information would soon be made available to delegations on a website.

The German delegation presented an invitation to the CSO to meet in Berlin in March 2009. The President, thanking the German delegation on behalf of the Committee for the invitation, stated that the JAF Group would examine the calendar and venues for future meetings at its next meeting in May.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Strategic workshops

  The Austrian delegation raised the question of Strategic Workshops and stressed the need to consider an effective information flow to make delegations more aware of these important interdisciplinary events. The CSO could discuss whether the Strategic Workshops should have the same relevance as COST Actions, and therefore be approved by the CSO.

  The President concluded that the JAF Group would discuss this item at its meeting on 14-15 May 2008 on the basis of a document prepared by the COST Office.

- On behalf of the Committee, the President thanked the members of the Greek delegation for the excellent organisation of the meeting in Athens.

ANNEX I

List of participants[1]

PRESIDENT	:	Mr Francesco FEDI
VICE-PRESIDENT	:	Mr John BARTZIS
AUSTRIA (AT)	:	Mr Florian HAUG Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs Ms Helga MIELING Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology
BELGIUM (BE)	:	Mr Hendrik MONARD Federal Science Policy
BULGARIA (BG)	:	Ms Guenoveva JETCHEVA Ministry of Education and Science
CROATIA (HR)	:	Mr Bozidar BIONDIC University of Zagreb Mr Damir JELICIC Ministry of Science
CYPRUS (CY)	:	Ms Constantina MAKRI Research Promotion Foundation
CZECH REPUBLIC (CZ)	:	Mr Jaroslav CIHLAR Technical University of Brno Mr Bedrich PEKAREK Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
DENMARK (DK)	:	Mr Gorm BRAMSNAES Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation
ESTONIA (EE)	:	Ms Ülle MUST Archimedes Foundation

[1] Regrets had been received from the Irish delegation.

FINLAND (FI)	:	Ms Eili ERVELÄ-MYREEN Finnish Academy
		Mr Raimo PULKKINEN TEKES
		Ms Eija AURANEN TEKES
fYR of MACEDONIA (MK)	:	Ms Katerina SUMANOVSKA Ministry of Education and Science
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
		Ms Nadja ROHRBACH EUREKA-COST Bureau
GREECE (EL)	:	Mr Euripidis MISTAKIDIS University of Thessaly
		Ms Katarina GALANOU General Secretariat for Research and Technology
HUNGARY (HU)	:	Ms Orsolya TOTH National Office for Research and Technology
ICELAND (IS)	:	Ms Hjördis HENDRIKSDOTTIR The Icelandic Mission to the EU
		Mr Snaebjorn KRISTJANSSON The Icelandic Centre for Research
ISRAEL (IL)	:	Mr Husam MASSALHA Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport
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)	:	Ms Josiane ENTRINGER Ministry of Research
NETHERLANDS (NL)	:	Mr Herman van der PLAS Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
NORWAY (NO)	:	Mr Bjørn BJØRNSEN 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 Ecaterina GICA National Authority for Scientific Research
SERBIA (RS)	:	Ms Biljana STOJANOVIC University of Belgrade
SLOVENIA (SI)	:	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)	:	Ms Eva KLAPER SER
TURKEY (TU)	:	Mr Mehmet KURAN TUBITAK
UNITED KINGDOM (UK)	:	Ms Janette McNEIL Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills Mr Chris REILLY Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills

COMMISSION, DG Research	:	Mr Jan-Arne EILERTSEN
COST OFFICE	:	Mr Martin GRABERT Mr Wolfgang OBERT Mr Afonso FERREIRA Ms Inge DE PRINS
COUNCIL SECRETARIAT	:	Mr Kimmo PEIPPO Ms Ulla MESIÄ Ms Laurence VANHULLE

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Approval of Summary of Conclusions of the previous meeting

Information items

3. Re-examination of the Legal Status and Governance of COST
   - Status report by Professor **Raoul Kneucker**, Rapporteur

4. Information from the CSO Presidency

5. Information from
   - delegations
   - COST Office (activities, future events, financial information)
   - COST Secretariat
   - Commission
6. Action-related items
   (a) Results of the third collection date of the Open Call
   (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

7. Status of the Final Evaluation and Progress Reports of COST Actions and COST website

8. Activities of the Working Group Guidelines

Items for approval

9. Open Calls
   (a) Number of yearly collection dates
   (b) Next collection date(s)

10. Revision of the Guidelines for Assessment, Monitoring, Evaluation and Dissemination of Results of COST Actions

11. Procedures for the presentation of MoU to CSO

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12. "COST and ESF Synergy: new ideas for the future"
    - by Professor **Marja Makarow**, ESF CEO

Items for approval

13. COST Fund
    (a) Statement of revenue and expenditure as at the end of the financial year 2007
    (b) Designation of auditors for the COST Fund for 2008
    (c) Next Call(s) for Funds

14. COST Outreach strategy

Items for discussion

15. Preparation for the Comprehensive Impact Study for the mid-term evaluation in 2010

16. Strengthening communication between the COST Office and the CSO

17. COST-ESF Synergy

18. Future meetings

19. Any other business

ANNEX III

Participation of institutions from non-COST countries approved by JAF[20]

COST Action	Title	Participating Institution	Country
D42	Chemical Interactions between Cultural Artefacts and Indoor Environment (EnviArt)	The Conservation Center institute of fine arts – New York University	USA
MP0702	Towards functional sub-wavelength photonic structures	International Laser Center, M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University	Russia
		Pushkov Institute of Terrestrial Magnetism, Ionosphere and Radiowave Propagation, Russian Academy of Sciences IZMIRAN, Troitsk, Moscow region	Russia
		Fiber Optics Research Center Moscow	Russia
		Saratov State University, Department of Physics, Laser Physics Group, 410012 Saratov	Russia
		MQPhotonics Research Centre, Macquarie University. Sydney	Australia
		State Engineering University of Armenia Yerevan	Armenia
		Laser Physics Centre, Research School of Physical Sciences and Engineering, Australian National University Canberra	Australia
		Optoelectronic Devices Group National Research Council of Canada Ottawa	Canada
IC-0601	Sonic Interaction Design (SID)	Sonic Communications Research Group University of Canberra	Australia
290	Traffic and QoS Management In Wireless Multimedia Networks (WI-QOST)	La Trobe University, Bundoora Campus, Melbourne, Victoria	Australia
IS0605	A Telecommunications Economics COST Network (Econ@Tel)	Partners for Health NGO / National Information Learning Centre	Georgia
730	Towards a Universal Thermal Climate Index UTCI for Assessing the Thermal Environment of the Human Being	School of Geography, Geology and Environmental Science, The University of Auckland	New Zealand
		Macquarie University N.S.W. 2109	Australia
C24	Analysis and Design of Innovative Systems for Low-EXergy in the Built Environment: COSTeXergy	Musashi Institute of Technology 3-1, Ushikubo-Nishi 3-chome	Japan

[20] It is recalled that when more than two institutions from the same non-COST country participate in an Action, they are requested to coordinate between themselves, and are allowed to be represented by up to two representatives from the particular non-COST country at the MC meeting.