



**European Cooperation
in Science and Technology
- COST -**

Secretariat

**Brussels, 6 September 2013
(OR. en)**

COST 4117/13

NOTE

To: COST Member Countries

Subject: RESOLUTION ON COST adopted through a written procedure by the European Ministers responsible for European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST)

The Representatives of the Governments of the COST Member Countries, acting through a written procedure,

Whereas

- (1) COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is an intergovernmental framework for the co-ordination of research at a European level, set up through the exchange of letters initiated by the President of the Council of the European Communities on 4 November 1969 and 24 July 1970, and the Ministerial Resolution of 22-23 November 1971 and subsequently developed by further Ministerial Conferences;
- (2) COST has proved to be a flexible, fast, integrative, effective and efficient tool to network and coordinate nationally funded research activities, bringing motivated scientists together to jointly develop their own ideas and new initiatives across all scientific disciplines under light strategic guidance, thus contributing to creating synergies in science and technology (S&T) activities and in contributing and strengthening Europe's research and innovation capacities in building the European Research Area (ERA); through its inclusiveness COST supports integration of research communities, leverages national research investments and addresses issues of global relevance;
- (3) The scientific community has continued to show high interest in COST as demonstrated by an overwhelming response to the COST Open Call, including the constantly increasing number of requests for participation in COST Actions including by institutions from non-COST countries;
- (4) During the FP7¹ COST is financially supported through a Grant Agreement between the European Commission and the European Science Foundation (ESF), who, as from 1 January 2003, has acted as the legal entity to provide and manage, through a COST Office, the administrative, technical and scientific secretariat for COST, its Domain Committees and its Actions;

¹ Decision No 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013).

- (5) The ESF will cease to carry out this function at the end of FP7 and therefore there is a need to find another solution to implement COST during the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation - Horizon 2020 (hereinafter "*Horizon 2020*");
- (6) The General Secretariat of the Council does not intend to provide the secretariat to COST beyond FP7;
- (7) The Representatives of the Governments of the COST Member Countries, meeting at the COST Ministerial Conference in Palma de Mallorca on 15 June 2010, "*acknowledged the work by the CSO in examining the options for the future legal status and governance of COST; encouraged the CSO to pursue this preparatory work, in particular by studying the conclusions of the FP7 mid-term evaluation of COST, so that it could, at the latest well before the end of FP7, come forward with appropriate conclusions and/or proposals in this respect which would ensure maintaining COST as a viable framework in compliance with the principles set out above; invited CSO to take any decisions in this regard, which fall within its remit, in a timely manner, and/or put forward any further proposals for the Governments of the COST Member States to consider.*"
- (8) A COST Office Association (COA) was established by 10 COST Member Countries on 8 June 2010 as an International non-profit Association under the Belgian Law (Association Internationale sans But Lucratif AISBL) with the aim to ensure the promotion, organisation, management and funding of practical support functions for COST;

1. RECONFIRM their commitment to COST as flexible, fast, integrative, effective and efficient tool for networking and coordinating research activities under light strategic guidance and REMAIN CONVINCED of the continued European added value of COST activities also in the future in the implementation and strengthening of the European Research Area (ERA);
2. ACKNOWLEDGE the work carried out by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) in examining the options for the new implementing structure for COST during Horizon 2020;
3. AGREE TO the Recommendation of the CSO² to implement COST through a legal entity under the legal form of an International non-profit Association under the Belgian Law (Association Internationale sans But Lucratif AISBL), the COST Association AISBL, (hereinafter "*COST Association*") that would integrate the current COST governance and executive bodies and replace the current arrangements as set out in the 1970 exchange of letters and the Ministerial Resolution of 1971; AGREE TO the Recommendation of the CSO to use the existing COA AISBL with revised Statutes and a new name as a basis for the COST Association; and STRESSES that the following boundary conditions in this respect must be met:

The new implementing structure shall

- (a) serve COST mission;
- (b) function according to principles of good governance;
- (c) operate according to the principles of efficiency, efficacy as well as assure sound, lean and cost-effective management;
- (d) be built on the values of integrity, commitment and transparency;
- (e) secure the management of funds through high quality accountability and financial auditing measures; it shall allow for taking appropriate measures to prevent irregularities and fraud;
- (f) not entail any additional costs to COST Member Countries compared to the FP7 period.

² Doc. COST 4162/12.

To guarantee these key principles, the governing bodies and administration shall be integrated in the new implementing structure; roles and responsibilities shall be clearly defined so as to assure the stability and continuity necessary for an effective implementation of COST Member Countries' interests;

4. INVITE the CSO to pursue the detailed work on the Statutes of the COST Association, including the mandates of its governance and executive bodies, as well as any other arrangements required towards the establishment of the COST Association;
5. CALL UPON the European Commission to provide timely advice on, in particular, any aspects relating to the contractual arrangements for the envisaged financial support for COST from Horizon 2020;
6. ENCOURAGE all COST Member Countries to take the necessary steps at national level in a timely manner with a view to all current COST Member Countries becoming members of the new COST Association;
7. STRESS the urgency of the preparatory work to allow the COST Association to become operational by the end of 2013, in order to ensure seamless continuation of COST operations.
