

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

Brussels, 12 November 2012

Secretariat

COST 4161/12

DRAFT SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Subject: JAF Group meeting¹ held in Brussels on 17 - 18 October 2012

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Group adopted the agenda as set out in CM 4588/12 of 26 September 2012².

2. Approval of Summary of Conclusions of the previous meeting

The Group approved the Summary of Conclusions of the JAF meeting of 5 September 2012 set out in document COST 4158/12.

¹ 30th meeting of JAF in its composition as set out in its Working Methods (COST 283/04). Exceptionally, any CSO member was invited to attend the meeting. List of participants is set out in Annex I.

² The agenda points are listed in Annex II.

3. COST implementing structure under the next Framework Programme "Horizon 2020"³

The President recalled the discussions at the previous JAF meeting⁴ on 5 September 2012 and the aim to arrive at a proposal on the New Implementing Structure (NIS) to be presented to the CSO in November 2012. The CSO would be asked to approve a Recommendation on the NIS that would be the basis for a draft Resolution that would need to be approved by the COST Ministers (early 2013). The President recalled that a set of questions had been raised by delegations and that these had been circulated to all delegations prior to the meeting. Draft responses had been prepared and were presented to the Group.

The Group noted that the COST Member Countries' decision on the principle, i.e. establishing a legal entity under the legal form of an International non-profit Association under the Belgian Law (AISBL) is urgent, while the detailed work on e.g. future Statutes of the AISBL would need more time and reflection. Therefore, the CSO should ask COST Ministers for a mandate to pursue the preparatory work on both statutes and mandates of the various governance and executive bodies.

The President recalled the earlier discussions on the possible use of the existing COST Office Association (COA) AISBL in this context. Prof. Bartzis, the acting COA President, gave a short presentation and an update on COA. He noted the willingness of COA to serve COST in line with the CSO decisions, should the CSO opt to use the COA as a basis for NIS. This would include issues such as relevant changes to the COA Presidency and Administrative Board, as well as the necessary changes to the COA Statutes.

³ The IT delegation had asked the following statement to be included in the summary: "Italy is of the opinion that decision on the future COST implementing agent needs to be taken as soon as possible, since the risk of a no-decision is the closure of the COST program. Therefore, Italy asks that on the agenda of the next CSO meeting an item, concerning a clear vote on the future COST implementing structure, is inserted and that every COST country expresses clearly its position on this urgent issue bearing in mind that a no-decision may damage the continuation of COST. "

⁴ Doc. COST 4158/12.

During the discussion some participants favoured the option to use the COA, while some others were hesitant as to whether this option eventually would facilitate the process in comparison to the establishment of a new entity. It was also pointed out that it needs to be clarified to what extent the current statutes of COA AISBL could be changed according to the Belgian law.

Finally, it was concluded that there is a need for legal advice regarding several questions that had been put forward. Some further questions had been raised during the meeting and would be added to a "Q&A" document. As regards the legal advice from various sources, the President observed that advice related to an AISBL needs to be sought from experts in Belgian law, while the Commission would be asked to provide its expertise on any contractual aspects and the Council Secretariat would be asked for advice on the procedural steps.

The President stressed the urgency to have documentation circulated to delegations as soon as possible, in order to provide delegations ample time for advance comments. The aim is to arrive at the CSO decision on its Recommendation to Ministers at the November meeting by consensus.

4. Progress report on COST-ESF separation roadmap

The COST Office Director reported on the work in progress on the separation roadmap between COST and ESF⁵. The roadmap has also been presented and re-confirmed during the COST-ESF High Level Group meeting on 3 October 2012 in Brussels.

⁵ The presentation on items 4 and 5 is available on the CSO website.

5. COST Grant Agreement: budgetary information

The COST Office Director informed the Group that the 5th amendment to the COST Grant Agreement had been approved by the Commission services on 27 July 2012. She also gave an overview of annual budget of COST and noted that, due to the conjunction of several events, such as the late allocation of the EUR 10 million in addition to the previous EUR 30 million, both allocated after the positive FP7 Mid-Term Evaluation of COST 2010, funds have not been fully committed,. Furthermore, the Group was informed of the staff situation and of the changes to the organisational chart of the COST Office, following consultation of an external expert with a view to designing a more efficient structure. The new chart will be implemented as from end of October 2012.

6. Action-related items

(a) Proposals for new COST Actions

The COST Office presented a shortlist of 40 new Action proposals following the evaluation procedure in accordance with the COST Guidelines. The Group was also informed of 16 best-ranked proposals in different domains that had been put on a reserve list. The Group discussed the proposed shortlist, noting a few changes to the EEP rankings as a result of the hearings by the Domain Committees.

Following an exchange of views the Group agreed to recommend to the CSO the approval of the 40 proposed Actions. Moreover, taking into account the budgetary situation, the Group agreed to recommend the approval of additional Actions from the reserve list, selected with an emphasis on some strategic factors, i.e. early stage researchers and gender, and also taking into account the draft summary comments from DC hearings⁶.

Finally, the Group reiterated its request that the reports from the hearings should be provided to the JAF Group as a rule, to provide more insight of the ranking, in particular in cases of differences between the EEP and DC ranking.

⁶ The final decision to select 6 further Actions was taken by written procedure after the meeting.

(b) Requests for extension of Actions

The Group approved all the requests for extension of COST Actions (Annex III). The Group observed that the requests for extension should be supported by a short justification by the relevant Domain Committee. The COST Office was asked to inform the DCs accordingly.

7. Proposal for COST CSO Documents for COST implementation rules

The COST Office Director gave a presentation of the draft proposals for COST CSO Documents for COST Implementation, namely:

- Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities
- Rules for COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval
- Rules for the Management of COST Actions
- Rules for COST Action Results, Outcome and Impact Assessment. and
- International Cooperation Rules

It was highlighted that these COST CSO documents are policy documents that need to be approved by the CSO, while the details on the implementation - fully aligned with the policy documents - should continue to be provided by the COST Office in a *Vademecum*. The Group discussed the draft documents and some detailed comments were made during the discussion. In general the participants complimented the COST Office for the substantial work that had been carried out with a view to achieving a coherent and streamlined set of policy documents.

The Group concluded that the documents would still need to undergo a scrutiny for coherence, and that revised drafts would be presented to the November CSO for discussion/ approval. The new rules would be expected to enter into force in June 2013.

8. Progress report on the Evaluation of COST Open Call procedure

The COST Office Director gave a short progress report on the evaluation of the COST Open Call procedure, carried out by five external observers appointed by the COST Office and specialised in the evaluation and selection of proposals in R&D. Each observer has delivered an individual report and a final meeting is foreseen on 19 October with a view to drafting a consensus summary report. The CSO will be informed of the results at its meeting in November 2012.

9. TDP Pilot Evaluation scheme

The Head of Science Operations of the COST Office gave a progress report on the TDP Pilot Evaluation and Selection procedure, that had been approved by the CSO in March 2012. He recalled the working document that had been presented to JAF in May and CSO in June 2012 and the Group was informed of the developments since June⁷. The Group was informed of the timetable for the registration of proposals and the evaluation procedure, following which a shortlist of proposals would be presented for CSO approval in November 2013.

The CSO will be informed of the progress with the TDP evaluation scheme at its meeting in November 2012.

10. Draft agenda for the 186th CSO meeting (20-21 November 2012)

The Group examined the draft agenda for the next CSO meeting scheduled for 20 - 21 November 2012⁸.

⁷ A draft progress report has been circulated to delegations prior to the meeting and is available on the CSO website.

⁸ The final version is set out in doc. CM 5012/12.

11. Future meetings

The Group took note of the dates of the future JAF and CSO meetings (latest version as set out in doc. COST 4113/1/12 REV 1).

The Group was informed that the CSO and JAF meetings in 2013 would continue to be convened by the Council Secretariat. The meeting in May 2013 will be hosted by the BE delegation in Brussels. Moreover, the DK delegate informed the Group of the DK invitation to host a CSO meeting in Copenhagen in November 2013.

12. Any other business

- New JAF member

The CSO President noted the need to appoint a new JAF member following the retirement of Mr Jean-Paul COURBEBAISSE. Following the previous practice in similar cases, she proposed that the new FR CSO delegate, Mr Antoine MERCIER, would be appointed as a JAF member for the remaining mandate. This proposal will be presented to the CSO for approval in November.

- Termination of COST Action MP0803

The COST Office had provided an information note prior to the meeting regarding the COST Action MP0803. A number of management issues together with the reluctance of the MC to take appropriate action, had led to the MPNS Domain Committee to vote in favour of terminating the Action. In accordance with the "Rules and Procedures for implementing COST Actions" (doc. COST 4159/10), and following the DC vote, the Group decided to recommend to the CSO that this Action would be terminated.

- Conflict of interest

IT had provided the following written comment on conflict of interest in writing prior to the meeting: "Considering the recent case of the management of potential conflict of interest. Italy asks the usage of the following procedure, in case a DC member is suspected of conflict of interest: - the DC member is informed on his/her exclusion from the evaluation procedure; - the DC Chair is informed; - the CNC is informed and ; - the CNC has the possibility to nominate another DC member for the call."

It was noted that while this practice is already in place "de facto", no common COST procedure exists. Therefore the Group agreed that questions relating to conflict of interest need to be addressed at a forthcoming JAF/CSO meeting with a view to common guidelines.

- Joint letter from DC Chairs to CSO delegates

The Group discussed the joint letter from DC Chairs that had been sent to CSO delegates. It was concluded that the CSO President and Vice-President would send a joint reply to the letter, to clarify any misunderstandings on the issues that had been raised.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CSO President:	Angeles RODRIGUEZ PEÑA	Spain
CSO Vice President:	Primož PRISTOVŠEK	Slovenia
JAF Members ⁹ :	Stefan CAIREN	Sweden
	Lieve VAN DAELE	Belgium
	Rita WARD	Ireland
	<i>Absent:</i>	
	<i>Arif ADLI</i>	<i>Turkey (regrets)</i>
Other participants:		
	Mr Ammar MIRASCIJA	Bosnia and Herzegovina
	Damir JELICIC	Croatia
	Gorm BRAMSNAES	Denmark
	Anne KLITGAARD	"
	Antoine MERCIER	France
	Vera STERCKEN	Germany
	Friederiche BEULSHAUSEN	"
	John BARTZIS	Greece
	Audrius ZVIKAS	Lithuania
	Yvonne SCHAAP	Netherlands
	Marek ZDANOWSKI	Poland
	Biljana STOJANOVIC	Serbia
	Marta SANCHEZ	Spain
	Birgitta BOMAN	Sweden
	Monica DIETL	COST Office
	Ursula CASTRO	"
	Markku WARRAS	Commission
	Ulla MESIÄ	Council Secretariat

⁹ Mr Jean-Paul COURBEBAILLISSE (FR) has resigned from CSO in September 2012 and has not yet been replaced in JAF.

AGENDA ITEMS

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 3. COST implementing structure in the next Framework Programme "Horizon 2020"
 4. Progress report on COST-ESF separation roadmap
 5. COST Grant Agreement: budgetary information
 6. Action-related items
 - (a) Proposals for new COST Actions
 - (b) Requests for extension of Actions
 7. Proposal for COST CSO Documents for COST implementation rules
 8. Progress report on the Evaluation of COST Open Call procedure
 9. TDP Pilot Evaluation scheme
 10. Draft agenda for the 186th CSO meeting (20-21 November 2012)
 11. Future meetings
 12. Any other business
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APPROVED REQUESTS FOR EXTENSION OF COST ACTIONS (with no budget implication)

COST Action	Title	Domain	Initial duration (Years)	Initial Expiry date dd/mm/yy	Approved extension
ES0804	Advancing the integrated monitoring of trace gas exchange between biosphere and atmosphere	ESSEM	4 years	16/02/2013	8 months
ES0806	Stable Isotopes in Biosphere-Atmosphere-Earth System Research (SIBAE)	ESSEM	4 years	24/05/2013	6 months
FA0805	Goat-parasite interactions: from knowledge to control (CAPARA)	FA	4 years	06/04/2013	9 months
FA0806	Plant virus control employing RNA-based vaccines: A novel non-transgenic strategy	FA	4 years	29/03/2013	6 months
FA0807	Integrated Management of Phytoplasma Epidemics in Different Crop Systems	FA	4 years	10/05/2013	7.5 months
FA0901	Putting Halophytes to Work – From Genes to Ecosystems	FA	4 years	14/10/2013	7.5 months
IC0805	Open Network for High-Performance Computing on Complex Environments – ComplexHPC	ICT	4 years	06/05/2013	2 months
IS0803	Remaking eastern borders in Europe: a network exploring social, moral and material relocations of Europe’s eastern peripheries	ISCH	4 years	14/01/2013	5 months
MP0804	Highly Ionised Pulse Plasma Processes	MPNS	4 years	25/06/2013	6 months
MP0805	Novel Gain Materials and Devices Based on III-V-N Compounds	MPNS	4 years	06/04/2013	6 months
MP0806	Particles in Turbulence	MPNS	4 years	18/05/2013	6 months
MP0901	Designing novel materials for nanodevices – from Theory to practice (NanoTP)	MPNS	4 years	18/11/2013	12 months

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF COST ACTIONS (with budget implication)

COST Action	Title	Domain	Initial duration (Years)	Initial Expiry date dd/mm/yy	Approved extension	Approved Budget
IS0806	The True European Voter: A Strategy For Analysing the Prospects of European Electoral Democracy That Includes the West, the South and the East of the Continent	ISCH	4 years	04/05/2013	12 months	€ 90.252

SPECIAL REQUEST DUE TO AN INITIAL MISTAKE IN THE ENCODING DATE

COST Action	Title	Domain	Initial duration (Years)	Initial Expiry date dd/mm/yy	Approved extension
ES0805	The Terrestrial Biosphere in the Earth System	ESSEM	4 years	11/06/2013	6 months