

COST

PROGRESS REPORT¹

on recent developments regarding S&T cooperation in/with the WBC (1st half 2011 or November 2010 / Becici - May 2011 / Ohrid)

1 Policy actions

(e.g. essential changes in the political authorities, administrative bodies, agencies, institutions, personnel, development/launch of new national funding programmes, etc.)

On 1 April 2011, Dr Monica Dietl joined the COST Office as its new director. As Director, Dr Dietl will support the CSO with the implementation of COST Actions as well as strategic matters. She will also support the ESF in its capacity of implementing agent of COST activities.

COST and the ESF have been informed by the European Commission Directorate-General for Research & Innovation of their decision to allocate an additional 30 million euro to COST. The additional funding raises the total budget for COST to 240 million euro for FP7.

An additional 10 million euro may be released to COST depending on developments in the EU budget.

2 Legislative initiatives - development of the legal and strategic framework

(from Summary of conclusions of the JAF* meeting held in Bonn on 13-14 April 2011)

*JAF - Executive Group of the COST Committee of Senior Officials (JAF)

The software tool for the approval of requests for participation in COST Actions was presented to JAF and is currently implemented.

Further attention could be given to the "non-COST" approval procedure, in particular as to whether all phases of the process are necessary. It was suggested that once the MC has approved a request, this decision would be communicated to all parties (DC, JAF, CSO, Secretariat). Any party would be able to object within a set deadline and to block the approval process, should it observe any problem with the request. In the absence of objections the

¹ The progress reports are collected in preparation of the meetings of the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan Countries and will be provided for download from the WBC-INCO.Net homepage (www.wbc-inco.net) about one week before the meeting takes place. Therefore please submit your report to office@zwbc-inco.net until May 15, 2011.

request would be deemed to be approved. The JAF Group agreed to propose that this issue would be further addressed in the context of the COST International cooperation.

Possible further review of COST Guidelines

Following the results of the satisfaction survey conducted on 29 March 2011 amongst grant holders regarding the COST Grant system the JAF Group was informed of the possible follow-up actions in the light of the results of the survey, such as considerations towards reintroducing the central management of the financial reimbursement process to the COST Office.

COST International Cooperation

Discussion on this item would be scheduled for the CSO meeting in December 2011.

The COST WG on International Cooperation will prepare a comprehensive background paper (including relevant data on various instruments/schemes, such as Reciprocal agreements and Near Neighbours) as a basis for the CSO discussion.

In this context the COST Office informed the JAF that Albania may wish to raise the question of its membership, possibly towards the end of the year.

3 Important events, meetings, training activities, etc.

COST Information Day in Albania of 22 November 2010.

On 22 November 2010, at the initiative of the established in early 2010 Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation of Albania (ARTI), COST and ARTI organised a COST Information Day in Tirana. This event was meant as a forum to bring together academics, researchers and decision makers from Albania to present COST instruments and activities and to exchange ideas on how to increase participation from Albania in the COST Actions. After the information event the COST delegation together with the ARTI representatives were received by Prof. Dr. Myqerem Tafaj, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Albania. The participants of this meeting underlined the importance of COST for the scientific community of Albania and particularly its dedication to the promotion of the young researchers.

COST met with Albanian Government officials on 23 March 2011 .

A visit of an Albanian Delegation to the COST Office took place in the frame of a more general study visit Albania conducted in Brussels with EU Institutions. Erisa Lame, of the ARTI and Rezarta Godo, of the Ministry of Education and Science, both were very enthusiastic about COST. They had recently concerted efforts to increase the participation of Albanian Scientists in COST Actions (e.g.: round tables on 21-24/02/2011 with the participation of winners of National funds for Research and Development, coordinated by ARTI). These efforts in the last months have already resulted in a considerable increase in the participation of Albanian Scientists in COST. The COST Office encouraged Albania to continue with their promotional efforts with view to further diversify the participation across the domains and Albanian institutions. Should the increase in participation continue at the current pace, Albania would probably like to submit a formal application to COST towards the end of the year, early next year.

4 Development of international cooperation and actions on integration into ERA

(e.g. new bilateral/international agreements, memberships, support structures, important international projects, programmes, etc.)

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5 Statistics - major changes / updates of relevant statistical data

The table below shows that for the first time since 2006 Montenegro is formally participating in 2 COST Actions. There is also a considerable increase in the participation of Albanian Scientists in COST since 2010. Overall all COST WBC (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia and Serbia) have their participations in COST Actions increased since May 2010.

Participations in COST Actions

	2007	2008	2009	May 2010	May 2011
COST COUNTRY					
BA	0	0	5	8	15
HR	63	63	64	63	82
MK	26	31	39	44	47
RS	66	73	84	86	97
Non-COST COUNTRY					
AL	0	1	1	2	6
ME	0	0	0	0	2

6 Assessment of the developments and outlook on the next 6 months

(Optional personal opinion)