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Mission

Founded in 1971, COST is an intergovernmental framework for European Co-operation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research, allowing the coordination of *nationally funded* research on a European level. COST Actions cover basic and pre-competitive research as well as activities of public utility.

The goal of COST is to ensure that Europe holds a strong position in the field of scientific and technical research for peaceful purposes, by increasing European co-operation and interaction in this field.

COST has clearly shown its strength in non-competitive research, in pre-normative co-operation and in solving environmental and cross-border problems and problems of public utility. It has been successfully used to maximise European synergy and added value in research co-operation and it is a useful tool to further European integration, in particular concerning Central and Eastern European countries.

Ease of access for institutions from non-member countries also makes COST a very interesting and successful tool for tackling topics of a *truly global nature*.

To emphasise that the initiative came from the scientists and technical experts themselves and from those with a direct interest in furthering international collaboration, the founding fathers of COST opted for a *flexible* and *pragmatic* approach. COST activities have in the past paved the way for Community activities and its flexibility allows COST Actions to be used as a testing and exploratory field for emerging topics.

The member countries participate on an “à la carte” principle and activities are launched on a “bottom-up” approach. One of its main features is its built-in flexibility. This concept clearly meets a *growing demand* and in addition, it *complements* the Community programmes.

COST has a geographical scope beyond the EU and most of the Central and Eastern European countries are members. COST also welcomes the participation of interested institutions from non-COST member states without any geographical restriction.

COST has developed into one of the largest frameworks for research co-operation in Europe and

is a valuable mechanism co-ordinating national research activities in Europe. Today it has almost 200 Actions and involves nearly 30,000 scientists from 32 European member countries and more than 46 participating institutions from 11 non-member countries and Non Governmental Organisations.

COST Status 2002

COST Countries

In total, institutions from 44 countries participate in COST under different forms:

33 member states:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

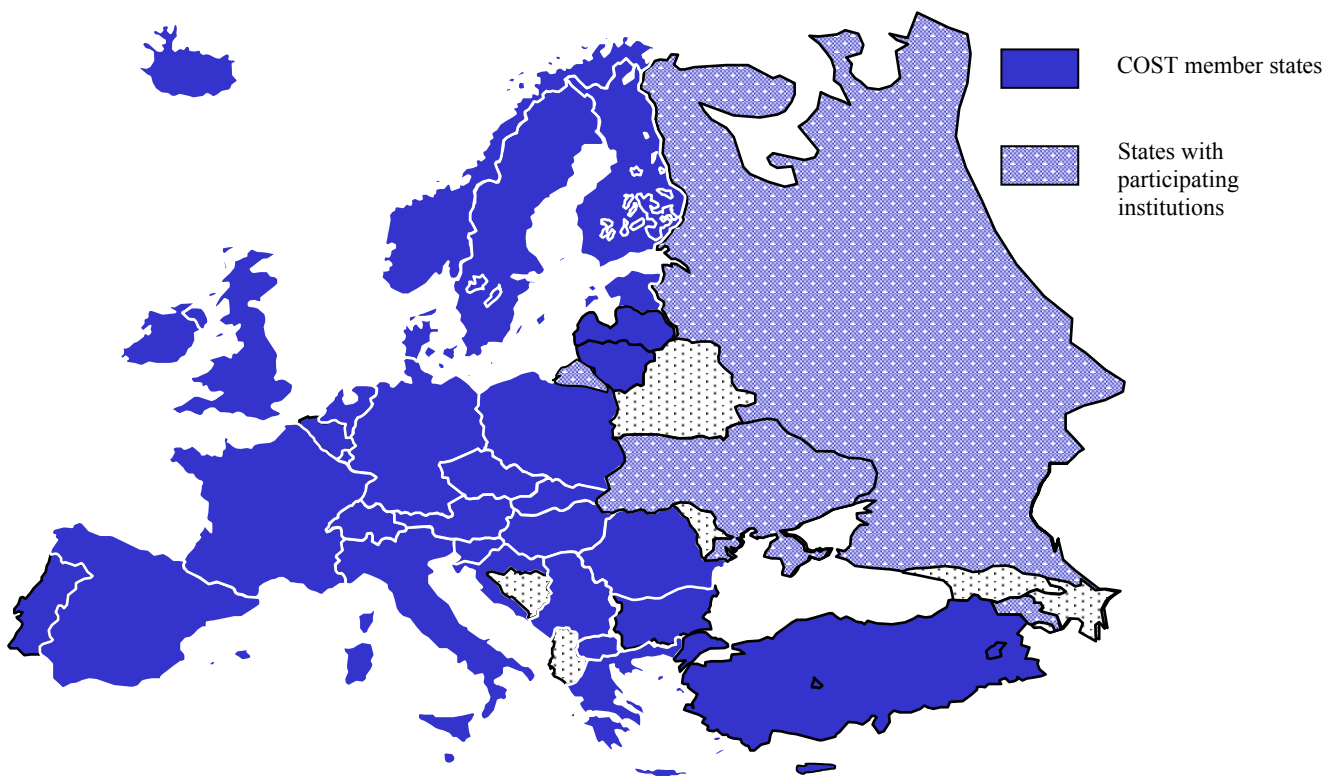
1 Co-operating State*: *Israel*

9 States with participating Institutions:

COST has a geographical scope beyond the EU. Institutions from non-COST countries may join COST Actions and at present, there are institutions from the following states: Armenia (2), Australia (2), Canada (4), India (1), Japan (3), China (Macao) (1), Russia (11), Ukraine (3), USA (6). There are also 3 participating Non Governmental Organisations (NGO).

* The status of Co-operation State implies non-voting membership in horizontal Committees (CSO and Technical Committees) and full member rights on Action level.

INTRODUCTION TO COST



COST Actions

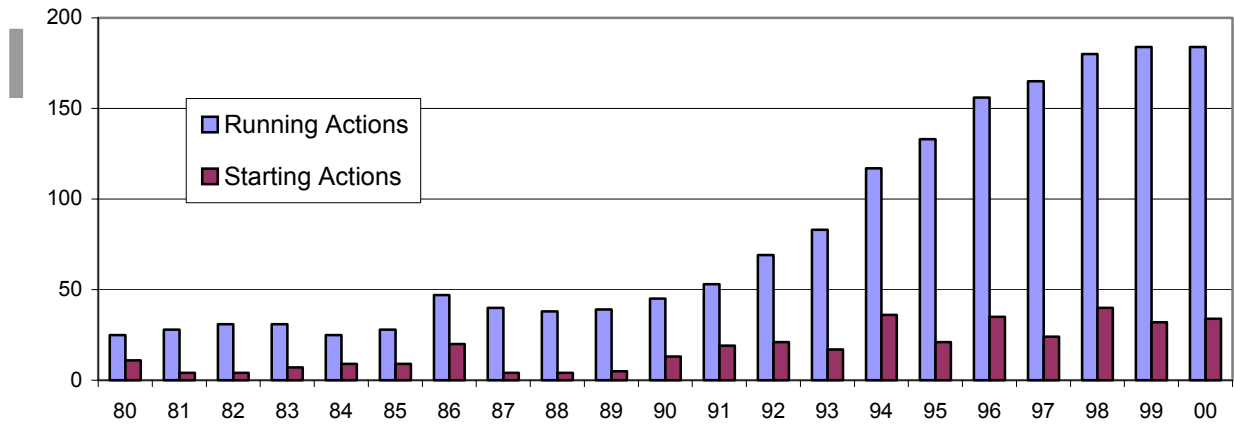
COST is based on Actions. These are networks of co-ordinated national research projects in fields, which are of interest to a minimum number of participants (at least 5) from different member states. The Actions are defined by a *Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)* signed by the Governments of the COST states wishing to participate in the Action.

The duration of an Action is generally 4 years.

Running Actions, their participating countries (signatories) and their duration are shown in the table on page 7.

The increasing number of COST Actions (see below) proves the success of COST within the European Scientific Community.

Yearly Evolution of the Running and Starting Actions

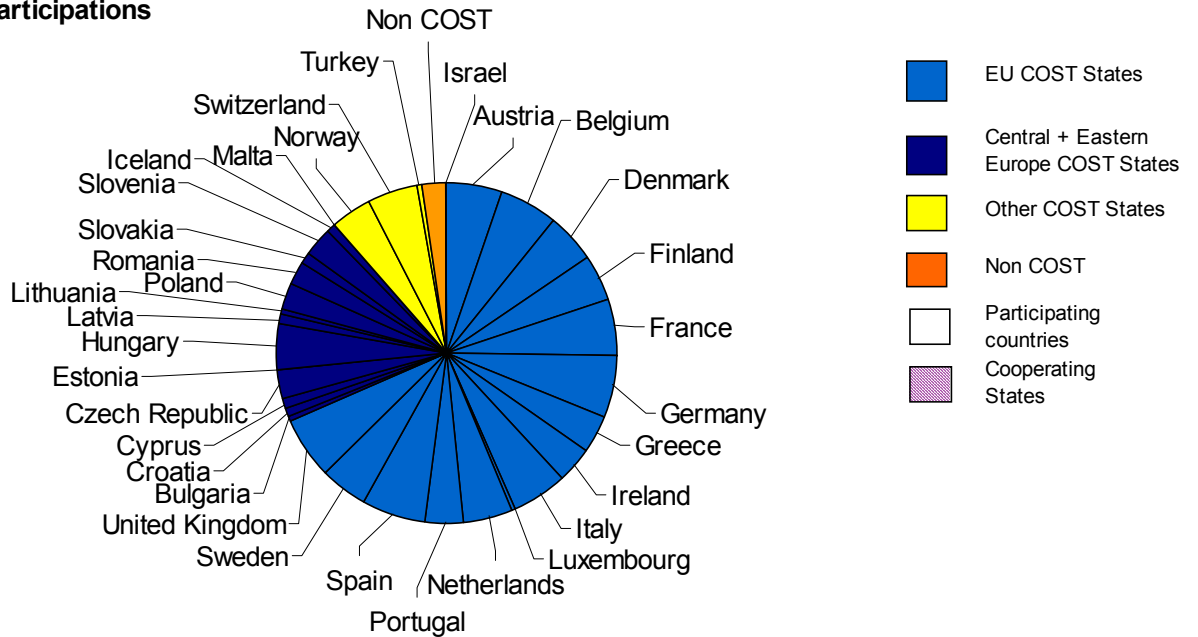


Level of country participation:

The participation of the various countries in COST actions is shown below. In general the participation over the member countries appears to be evenly distributed.

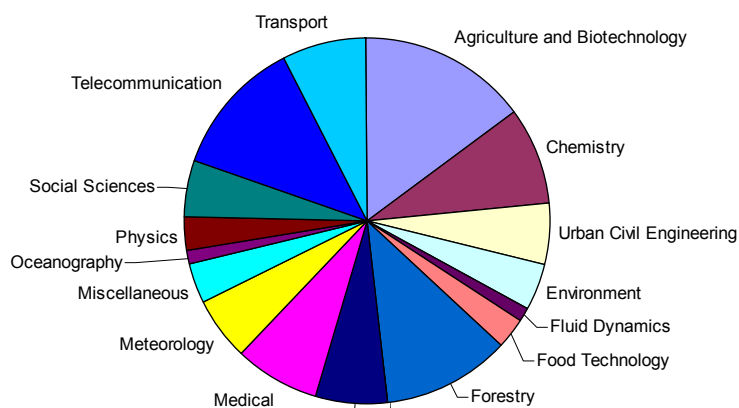
No significant change in this distribution has taken place over the last 5 years.

Countries Participations



Scientific domains

COST covers a wide range of scientific and technological domains. The present 17 domains and their share of running actions in 2001 are shown below.



Funding

COST represents an estimated volume of **national** funding of more than € 1.5 billion per year.

An average of € 60 000 per Action is available for co-ordination depending on size and activity of the Action. This expenditure represents on average 0.5% of the overall national funding, which shows that COST gives excellent value for money.

This funding is basically used to cover co-ordination costs such as contributions to

workshops/conferences, travel costs for meetings, contributions to publications and short term scientific missions of researchers to visit other laboratories.

How to create or join an Action:

In order to create or join an Action, just contact the relevant national COST Co-ordinator for details or study the relevant documents on the COST web-page (see below).

COST Organisation Structure

The main bodies of COST are:

Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)

The CSO is the decision making and highest body in COST. It is composed of COST member states representatives, one of whom in each case acts as COST **National Co-ordinator** (see below).

Technical Committees (TC) are responsible for a particular sector under the authority of the CSO. Responsible for technical preparation work, they also oversee the implementation of the Actions and aid in the co-ordination, evaluation in an advisory capacity.

Management Committees (MC) are in charge of implementating, supervising and co-ordinating the COST Actions. An MC is formed by not more than two representatives of each Signatory Country.

COST National Coordinator (CNC)

One member of the CSO from each member state acts as national coordinator (CNC) for COST Actions. The CNC provides the liaison between the scientists and institutions in his country and the Council COST secretariat.

The CNC has specifically to:

- ensure that the national funding is available
- appoint and officially forward the names of the national delegates to the technical committees (TC) and management committees (MC);
- forward proposals from other countries to experts in his own country; and
- assess at national level all projects undertaken within the COST framework.

Secretariat

The secretariat is provided by the European Commission (scientific and administrative matters) and the Secretariat General to the Council of the European Union (secretariat of the CSO).

COST on the *Internet*

Internet: Further information may be obtained directly from the EU COST secretariat (for details see back of front page)

The URLs of the official COST websites are:

<http://cost.cordis.lu>

<http://www.belspo.be/cost/>

Links: Most domains and actions as well as the Council secretariat and various national coordinators have their own WEB page, most of them linked with the COST home page.

Forum: A forum is included in the COST website where different groups can discuss and interchange opinions about themes related to COST.

Country abbreviations:

The following abbreviations are used in the directory and based on the postal codes.

Austria	A	Latvia	LV
Belgium	B	Lithuania	LT
Bulgaria	BG	Luxembourg	L
Croatia	HR	Malta	MT
Cyprus	CY	Netherlands	NL
Czech Republic	CZ	Norway	N
Denmark	DK	Poland	PL
Estonia	EE	Portugal	P
Finland	FIN	Romania	RO
France	F	Slovakia	SK
Germany	D	Slovenia	SI
Greece	GR	Spain	E
Hungary	H	Sweden	S
Iceland	IS	Switzerland	CH
Ireland	IRL	Turkey	TR
Italy	I	United Kingdom	GB
Israel	IL	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	YU
		Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	MK