Mission

Founded in 1971, COST is an intergovernmental framework for European **CO**-operation in the field of **S**cientific and **T**echnical Research, allowing the co-ordination 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 cooperation and interaction in this field.

COST has clearly shown its strength in non-competitive research, in pre-normative cooperation 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 cooperation 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-COST Member States 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 States 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 cooperation in Europe and is a valuable mechanism coordinating national research activities in Europe. Today it has almost 200 Actions and involves nearly 30,000 scientists from 34 European Member States and more than 80 participating institutions from 11 non-COST Member States and Non Governmental Organisations.

COST Status 2004

COST Countries

In total, institutions from 46 countries participate in COST under different forms:

34 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, Serbia and Montenegro, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
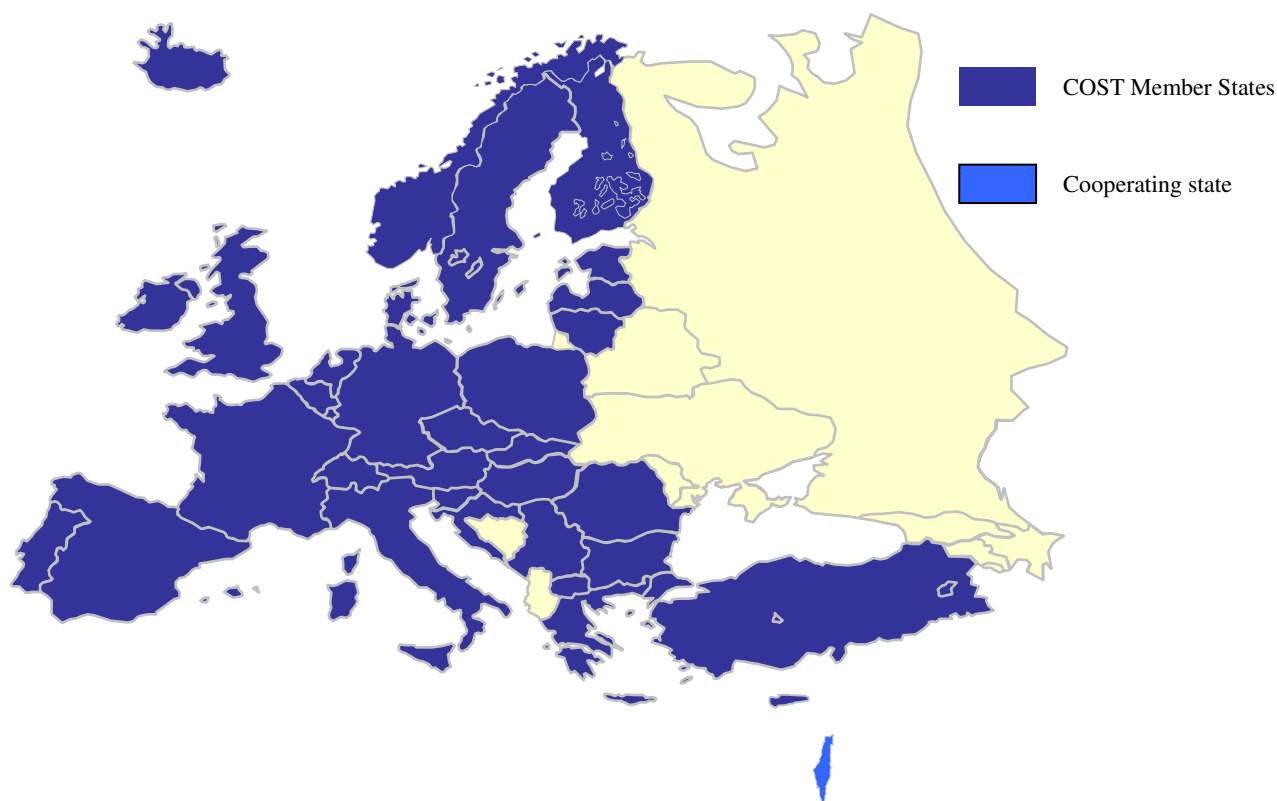
1 Cooperating State*: *Israel*

11 States with participating Institutions:
COST has a geographical scope beyond the EU. Institutions from non-COST countries may join COST Actions. In 2003, there were institutions from the following countries: Algeria (1), Argentina (1), Australia (4), Canada (18), China (Macao) (2), Eritrea (1), India (1), Japan (4), Russia (15), Ukraine (8), USA (16) and also 7 participating Non Governmental Organisations (NGO)

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

COST Member States

Cooperating state

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.
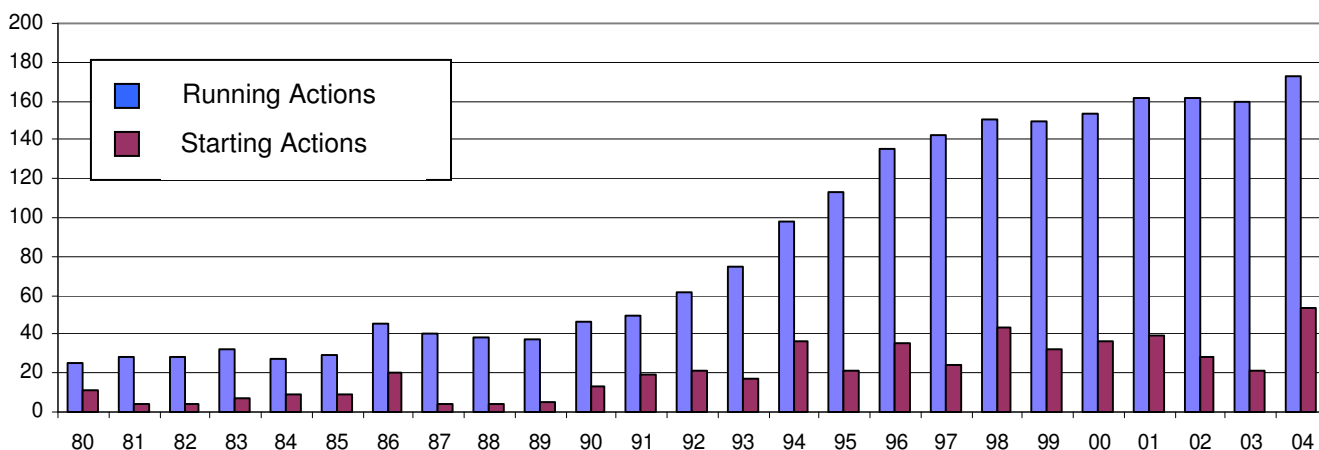
The duration of an Action is generally 4 years.

Running Actions, their participating countries (signatories) and their duration are shown our Signatories spreadsheet.

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

Yearly Evolution of the Running and Started COST Actions up to 2004
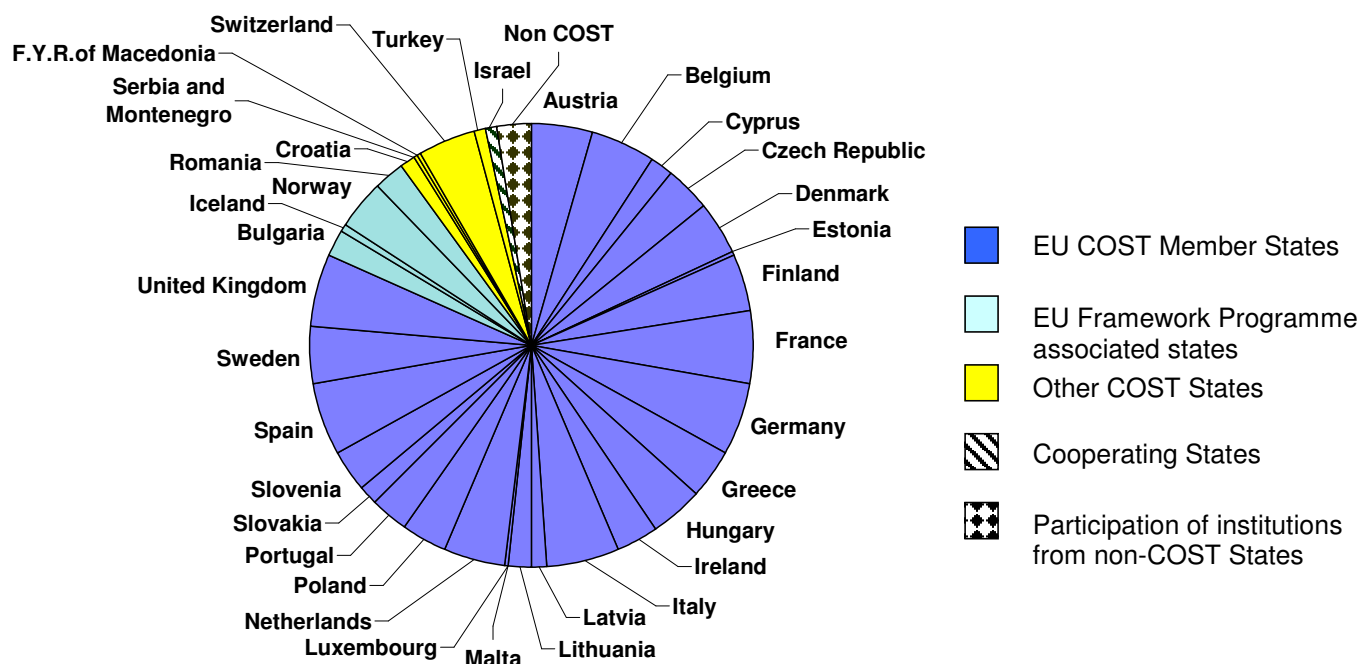### (Status on 31st December)
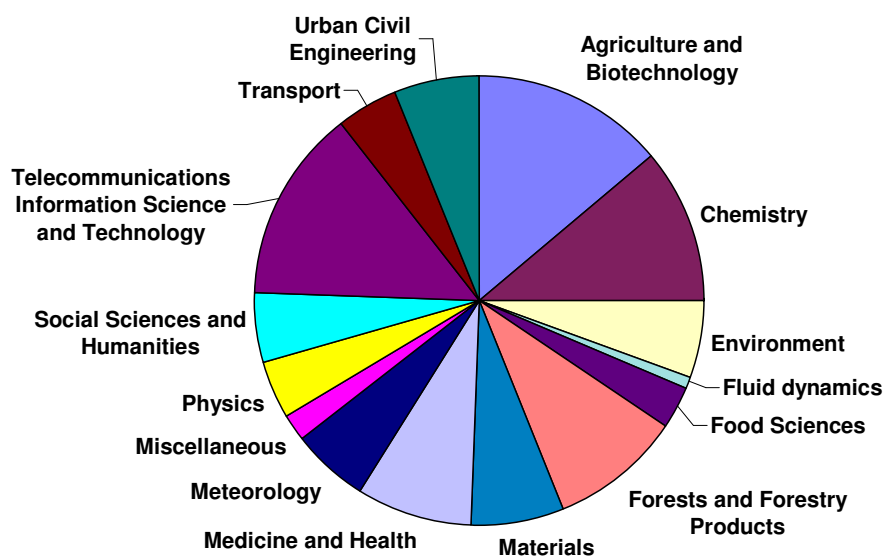
Level of country participation:

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

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

Legend:
- EU COST Member States
- EU Framework Programme associated states
- Other COST States
- Cooperating States
- Participation of institutions from non-COST States

Scientific domains

COST covers a wide range of scientific and technological domains. The present 15 domains and their share of running actions in 2003 are shown below.

3

Funding

COST represents an estimated volume of **national** funding of more than € 2.0 billion per year.

An average of € 80 000 per Action is available for co-ordination depending on size and activity of the Action. This expenditure represents less than 1% 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 Coordinator 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 Coordinator** (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 COST Office operated by the European Science Foundation (ESF) provides scientific and administrative support to the COST Technical Committees and COST Actions. It acts as a focal point for advice on European research networking. The Secretariat General to the Council of the European Union provides the secretariat to the CSO.

COST on the *Internet*

Internet: Further information may be obtained directly from the ESF COST Office
The URLs of the official COST websites are:
http://cost.cordis.lu

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

Country abbreviations:

The following abbreviations are used in the directory and based on the ISO code.

Austria	AT	Latvia	LV
Belgium	BE	Lithuania	LT
Bulgaria	BG	Luxembourg	LU
Croatia	HR	Malta	MT
Cyprus	CY	Netherlands	NL
Czech Republic	CZ	Norway	NO
Denmark	DK	Poland	PL
Estonia	EE	Portugal	PT
Finland	FI	Romania	RO
France	FR	Slovakia	SK
Germany	DE	Slovenia	SI
Greece	GR	Spain	ES
Hungary	HU	Sweden	SE
Iceland	IS	Switzerland	CH
Ireland	IE	Turkey	TR
Italy	IT	United Kingdom	UK
Israel	IL	Serbia and Montenegro	CS
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	MK		