



Advancing alignment via networking and capacity building amongst researchers

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COST - European Cooperation in Science and Technology

- COST is an **intergovernmental, pan-European Framework** with currently 36 Member Countries (and one cooperating state)
- COST **mission** is to **enable breakthrough Scientific and Technological developments** through trans-European **networking of national research investments**
- The **COST Association** is a new legal entity, integrating COST governance, management and implementation functions, dedicated to COST activities
- **Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA)** strategic Action Plan with the European Commission for the seven years under Horizon 2020 and successive Specific Grant Agreements for its implementation
- **EUR 300 million budget** (constant prices) for 7 years drawn from two Horizon 2020 work programmes, Challenge 6 “Europe in a changing world - inclusive, innovative and reflective Societies” and “Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation”



The COST instrument: COST Action

COST Actions are pan-European, bottom-up **science and technology networks** open to researchers from academia and industry or to policy stakeholders

COST does not fund research itself, but supports networking activities carried out within **COST Actions**

Every COST Action lasts for up to **four years** and requires the participation of researchers from at least **5 COST Member Countries**

How do COST Actions work?



Scientists and researchers network and collaborate within COST Actions using different networking tools:

- Management Committees
- Working Group Meetings
- Scientific Workshops and Seminars
- Training Schools
- Short-Term Scientific Meetings (STSMs)
- Dissemination and Publications

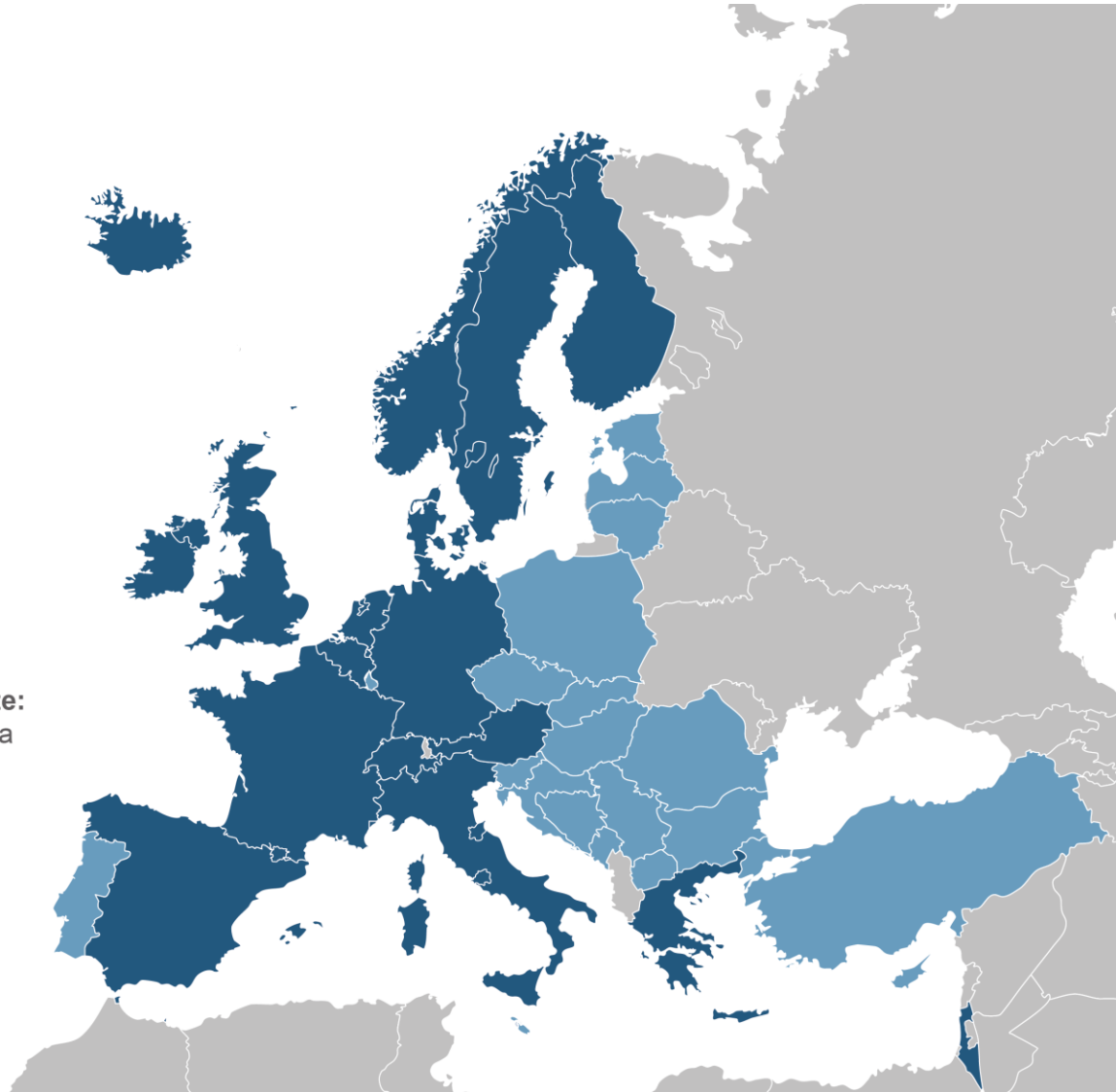
COST “Inclusiveness” Countries

- **EU 13:**
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Estonia
Hungary
Latvia
Lithuania
Malta
Poland
Romania
Slovakia
Slovenia

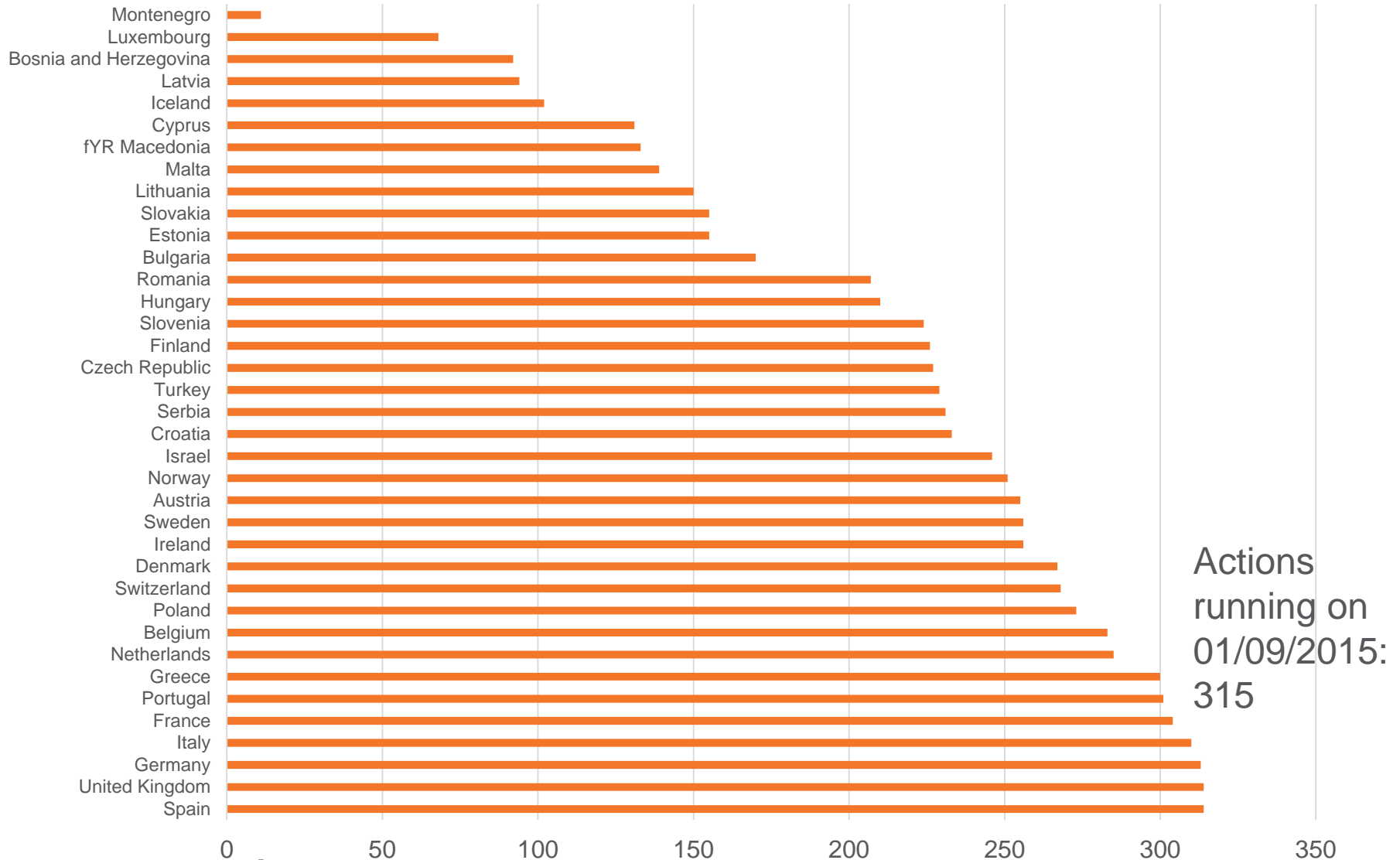
- EU Candidates:**
fYR Macedonia
Montenegro
Republic of Serbia
Turkey

- EU Potential Candidate:**
Bosnia and Herzegovina

- EU Countries targeted by EC:**
Luxembourg
Portugal



Country participation to COST Action





COST Policies

COST Policies aim at creating cooperation opportunities for researchers, engineers and scholars from all COST Member Countries (and cooperating state). They specifically aim to fill the void left by other science funding through bringing together a wide array of researchers and by leveraging money and efforts through international cooperation.

- Researcher-driven, **bottom-up**, open to any novel and original idea **leading to new concepts and products**
- **COST Excellence & Inclusiveness Policy** with special focus on its Inclusiveness Target Countries, giving more visibility to:
 - Geographical balance
 - Young talents and next generation leaders
 - Gender balance
- **Industrial Dimension** leading to **Innovation** with special focus on SME participation

COST Strengths



COST supports the networking of researchers through science and technology networks called 'COST Actions' and open to:

- Any novel and original idea (innovative)
- All fields of S&T (including interdisciplinary, new and emergent fields)
- All partners (public and private, big and small)
- All career stages (young and senior researchers)
- All countries (small and big, leader and follower countries)

COST aims at the same time for inclusiveness and for novel approaches, which go beyond traditional perspectives, and which enable networks of researchers to tackle complex problems

A successful COST Action: SMARTER



COST Action FA1203:
Sustainable
management of
Ambrosia artemisiifolia
in Europe (SMARTER)



SMARTER: the essence

Ambrosia artemisiifolia, trivially known as ‘common ragweed’, is an exotic plant in Europe, coming from North America. The weed can reduce agricultural yields with up to 30 percent, with some crops, like maize, being especially vulnerable. Moreover, ragweed emits pollen which are a health hazard to people having pollen allergies

The SMARTER Action, started in 2012, aims to tackle the threat posed by this weed. It brings together plant scientists, ecologists, health scientists and medical specialists. Through this interdisciplinary focus, different methods to either contain or resolve the hazard posed by ragweed



SMARTER: who participates

- Participants from 35 countries, mostly from Europe, but also from Asia and North America
- Interest from the DG Sanco, the DG Environment, the European Food Safety Authority and the European Plant Protection Organisation
- Involvement from several regional and local authorities and interest groups
- Participation by experts in agricultural sciences, by national research institutes and by medical officials



Key factors in success of COST

- COST does not only bring resources to research networks, but also ‘human capital’
- COST National Coordinators raise awareness of the COST framework at national level
- Independent rapporteurs follow and evaluate the execution and progress of COST Actions
- The COST Scientific Committee selects the Actions, supervise the quality of the process and assesses the impact of the Actions



Suitability of COST Actions

- COST Actions are most suitable where there is a research problem which goes beyond the interest of a small group of researchers, and which touches upon a broad range of disciplines
- COST Actions can especially make a difference where research problems have implications for economy or society, like in the example of ragweed
- COST Actions enable the integration of players from outside academia, like industry associations, governmental bodies and SMEs



Conclusions

- COST Actions: interdisciplinary, inclusive, bridging academia and public and private sector
- COST Actions involve a common goal, but individuals from different backgrounds and professions
- COST Actions are ideally suited to study and tackle complex research questions



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