



# **COST:PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

**Francesco Fedi**

**President COST Committee “Senior Officials”**

# COST



## COoperation in Science and Technology

**It was the first and it is one of the widest intergovernmental European Network for coordination of nationally funded scientific and technical research**

**COST**

---



**1971**

**Conference of the Ministers of Research of  
19 European countries convened in  
Brussels in November**

**opened the possibility of cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical research for :**

- the 6 countries of the European Community**

(Belgium, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands)

- 13 countries not belonging at that time to the European Community**

(Austria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Yugoslavia, Spain, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden, Turkey and United Kingdom)

# **COST INSTRUMENT**

---



## **COST ACTIONS**

**Networks of Researchers built around a research project with clear objectives**

## **COST SUPPORT**

**Economic support only for the networking (meetings, workshops, short term scientific missions, etc.)**

# COST

---

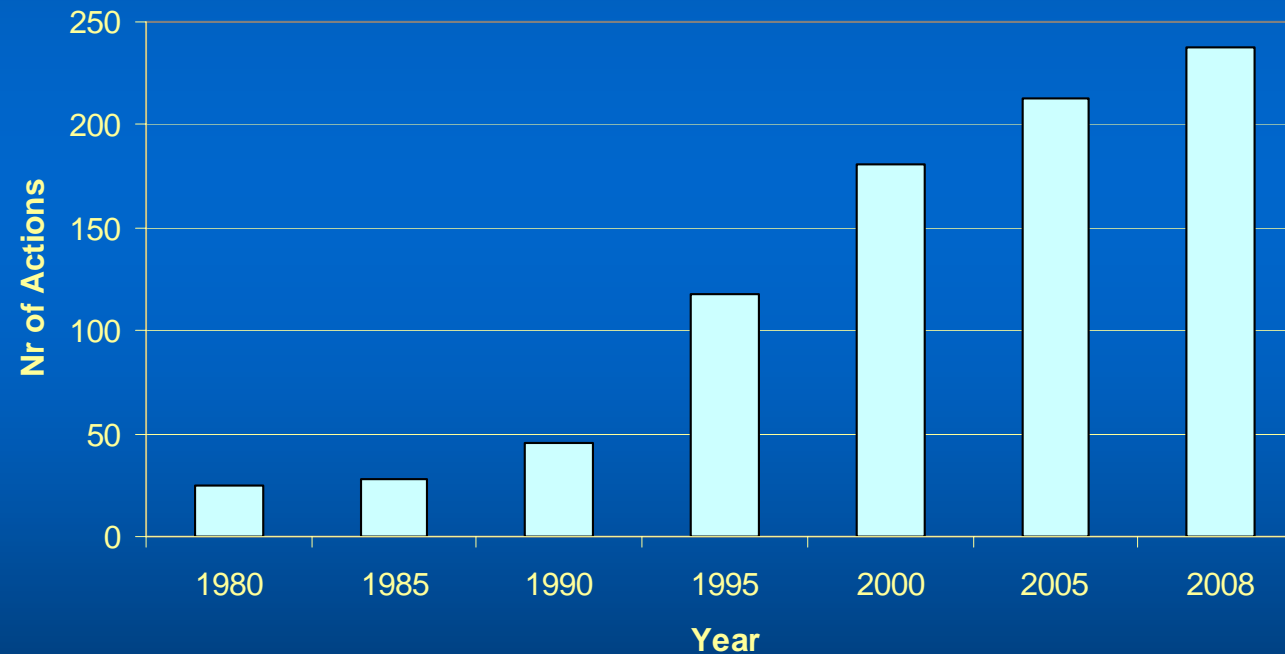


**IN THE LAST 40 YEARS.....**

# COST TO DAY



From 7 Actions in 1971 ...



... to > 200 running Actions today.

# COST TO DAY

---



From 19 countries in 1971 ...



... to 36 countries today.

# 36 COST COUNTRIES



## 35 COST MEMBER STATES

### 27 EU European countries

*Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.*

### 8 European countries

*Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey.*

## 1 COST COOPERATING STATE

*Israel*

# COST

---



**“COST contributes to avoid fragmentation  
of national research efforts in the ERA”**

# COST

---



The mission of COST is to be :

**a fast, efficient, effective, flexible framework**

**to get motivated scientists together**

**under light strategic guidance**

**to let them work out their ideas**

# COST CHARACTERISTICS



- **Bottom- up approach.** The initiative of launching a COST Action comes from the scientists and technical experts themselves.
- **“A la carte” participation.** Only the countries interested in the Action sign the relevant “Memorandum of Understanding”. A minimum number of 5 signatures is needed.
- **Equality of access.** Participation is open also to the scientific communities of countries not belonging to the European Union . COST has therefore the ability to anticipate the evolving European political situation: a “bridge” to the scientific communities of countries of the whole Europe and of the world.

# COST CHARACTERISTICS



- **Concerted Actions.** Coordination of research funded through national funds. Duplications and gaps are avoided. Consequent synergy and work sharing allows a more efficient use of national resources.
- **Multiplier effect.** The funds provided by COST are less than 1% of the total value of the Actions: in FP6 with only about 20 million € per year, more than 30.000 European scientists are involved in research whose total value exceeds 2 billion € per year.

# COST CHARACTERISTICS



- **Flexibility.** Easy implementation and agile management of research Actions through a simple structure.
- **The Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)** highest decision-making body made of representatives of all COST member countries.
- **The Domain Committees (DC)** each responsible for a particular research domain formed by representatives of the COST countries.
- **The Management Committees (MC)** (one for each Action) formed by national experts of the countries participating in the Action.

# SCIENTIFIC QUALITY CONTROL



**By the COST DC's assisted by the COST Office**

**Assessment of proposals for new Actions.** Peer review by an Assessment Panel

**Monitoring of the Actions in progress .** Annual “Progress Report” presented by the MC Chairs in the yearly meeting with the relevant DC.

**Evaluation of completed Actions.** Peer review by an Evaluation Panel

# SCIENTIFIC DOMAINS

---

**Biomedicine and Molecular Bioscience**

**Food and Agriculture**

**Forests their Products and Services**

**Materials, Physical and Nanosciences**

**Chemistry and Molecular Sciences & Technologies**

**Earth Systems Science & Environmental Management**

**Information & Communication Technologies**

**Transport & Urban Development**

**Individuals, Society, Culture & Health**

# COST OPEN CALLS FOR NEW ACTIONS



**Thematically open**

**Encourage multidisciplinary proposals**

**Improve transparency**

**Ensure quality**

**Increase competitiveness**

**Emphasis on Early Stage researchers**

**Selection criteria are public ( COST Guidelines)**

**Two collection dates/year**

**2-stage process / peer reviewed ( Preliminary and full proposals)**

**start activities within 9 months after the collection date**

# RESULTS

- **Scientific importance.** Thousands of papers. Ph Doctors. Recognition of COST scientific community outside Europe.
- **Contribution to European competitiveness.** Contributions to normative and standardization bodies. SME's originating from COST Actions. Transfer of results to European Industry.
- **Societal importance.** Delicate issues arising from pressing societal needs.
- **Contribution to the ERA.** COST precursor of research projects in the FP's. Networks of Excellence from COST Actions in FP6.

# COST

---



**" COST contributes to increase the  
cooperation on a world basis"**

One of the key features of COST is its openness towards the rest of the world.

Institutions from non-COST countries can join an Action on a case by case basis once the mutual benefit has been ascertained, without the need for any formal arrangements at government or agency level

# COST

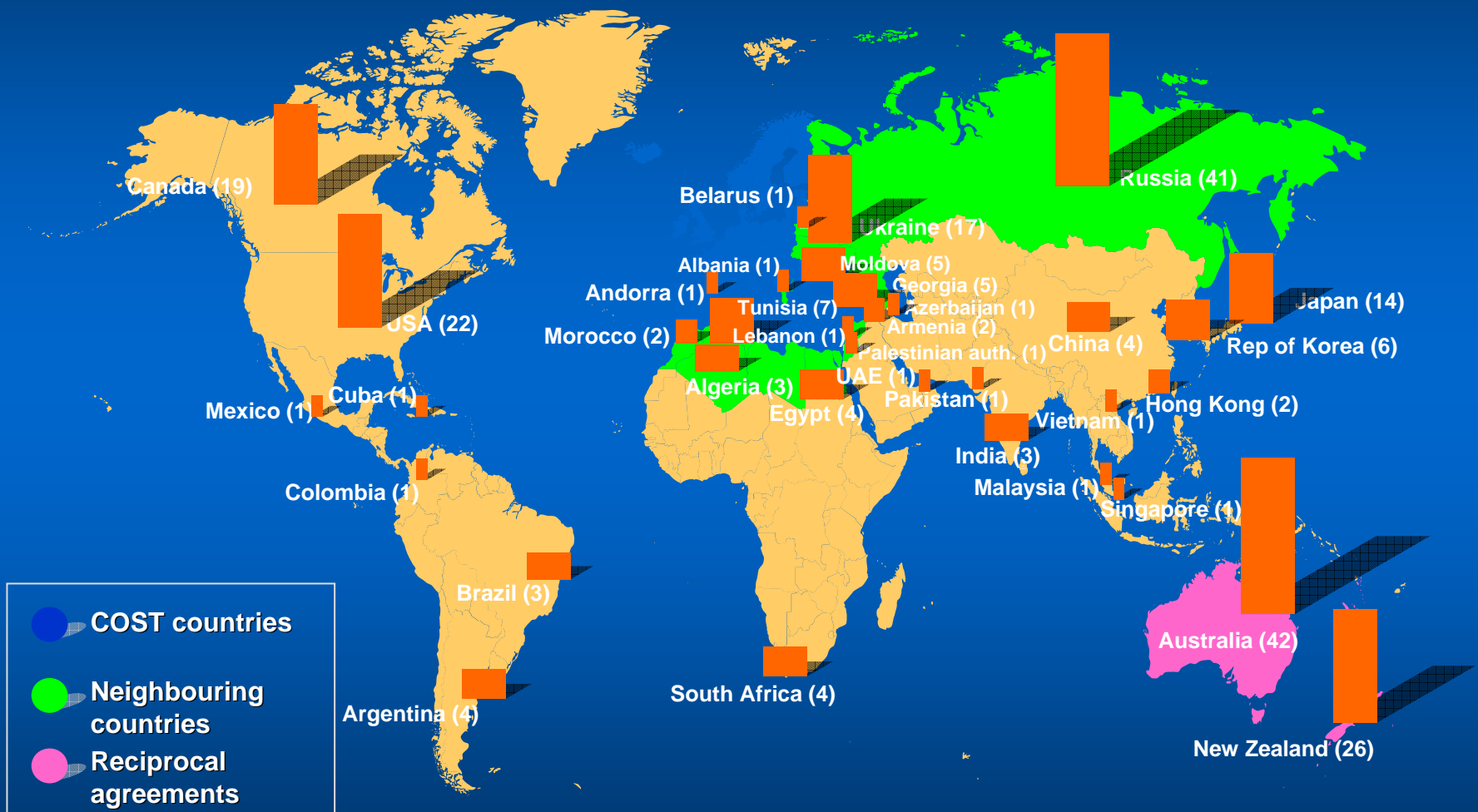
---



With such easy accessibility and light and fast procedures, COST is a “bridge” for the scientific communities:

- on a world basis
- and in particular for the European neighbouring countries

# COST Actions: global participation



251 participations in 103 Actions (36 countries)

In general researchers from Institutions from non-COST countries do not receive economic support from COST

There are however some notable exceptions

## For the near-neighbouring countries

Balkan and Eastern countries (*Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine*)

Mediterranean and north-African countries (*Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority*)

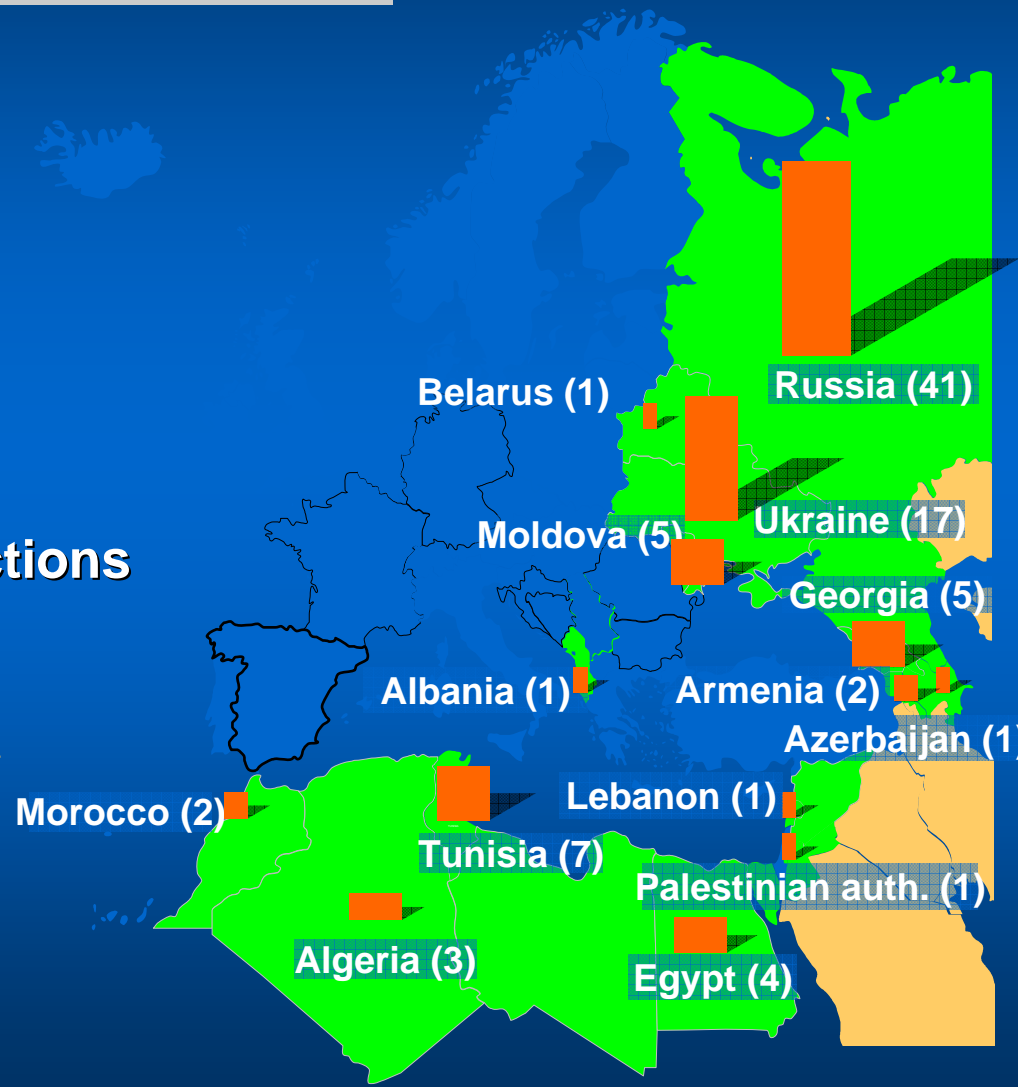
Researchers from these countries may be reimbursed by COST for their participation in the Action.



# COST and the Neighbouring Countries

-  COST countries
-  COST neighbouring countries

In 2008: 90 participations in 45 Actions



# FINANCIAL SUPPORT

---



**THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN FP7**

**OF UP TO 250 MILLION EURO**

**A SUCCESS FOR COST OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE**

# REWARD



**The increase of about 80% of the financial support to COST  
with respect to the Sixth Framework Programme is**

- an acknowledgment of the excellence of COST and**
- a reward of paramount importance for the entire COST community**

# SERBIA



**Serbia presently participates in 63 COST Actions**

**The Serbian scientific community is encouraged to continue to use this unique opportunity, to submit proposals for new COST Actions and to join COST Actions in progress**

**[www.cost.esf.org](http://www.cost.esf.org)**

# CONCLUSIONS

---



**It has to be hoped that**

**the expected brilliant future of COST**

**will continue to be an important opportunity**

**for the COST scientific community**

**and for opening the ERA to the world**