



COST Info day

European Cooperation in Science and Technology

6 November 2015, Prague Czech Republic



Outline

1. What is COST and how does it work?

Dr Angeles Rodríguez-Peña, COST Association President

- COST Overview
- COST Structure
- COST Policies

2. What are the COST Actions and how to participate in them? COST Actions: the networking instrument

Chister Halen, Senior Administrator Science Operations

- COST Countries
- Structure and Decision Making
- Strategy Work and Budget Plan
- Networking Tools
- How to Participate

3. How to prepare a successful proposal?

Chister Halen, Senior Administrator Science Operations

- New Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA) procedure
- Proposal Preparation – Practical Aspects





1. What is COST and how does it work?





What is COST?

COST (CO-operation in Science and Technology) is a **pan-European** intergovernmental framework dedicated to **networking activities** for European researchers, enabling them to **jointly** develop their **own ideas** and **new initiatives** across **all scientific disciplines** through **trans-European coordination** of nationally funded research activities.

What is COST?

- ❑ The oldest and widest European **intergovernmental framework** for transnational Cooperation in Science and Technology, funded in 1971
- ❑ From 19 countries in 1971 to the **36 COST countries** and beyond for more than 40 years
- ❑ One instrument: the **COST Action**, networks of partners from COST countries to support cooperation and coordination of research activities to fulfil its mission

COST Mission Statement

COST enables **breakthrough scientific and technological developments** leading to new concepts and products, and contributing to **strengthen** Europe's research and innovation **capacities** through **trans-European networking** of nationally funded research activities.



technology
future
innovation
concepts
science
inspiration
inclusiveness

Why is COST a success?

- **Building trust** with and within the scientific communities in Europe and beyond.
- Combining **stability with adaptability** while preserving its core mission
- Creating **knowledge** and facilitating its spreading and application



Knowledge sharing leads to...

- a common understanding of problems at hand
- coordinated activities
- reduced risk
- synthesis and re-combination of spread pieces of knowledge
- innovation
- synergies ($1 + 1 > 2$)



COST Strengths and Key Features

- ❑ Bottom-up: original idea/not thematic.
- ❑ Pan-European,...
- ❑ Openness
- ❑ Capacity-building
- ❑ Provide equal opportunities – remove bottlenecks
- ❑ Spreading of knowledge – dissemination of results
- ❑ Output and impact oriented
- ❑ Leverage nationally funded research
- ❑ Light structure and administration

COST principles:

COST Actions based on the following principles:
bottom-up, openness, inclusiveness and excellence

All fields of S&T (highlight on trans-, multi-, interdisciplinary, new and emergent fields)

All partners (academia, public organisations, SME, industry, NGO, International Organisations)

All career stages (young and experienced researchers)

All countries

- COST Countries (COST Member Countries + Cooperating State (Israel))
- Global cooperation on the basis of mutual interest (NNC, IPC)
- Geographical balance



COST budget is provided by Horizon 2020

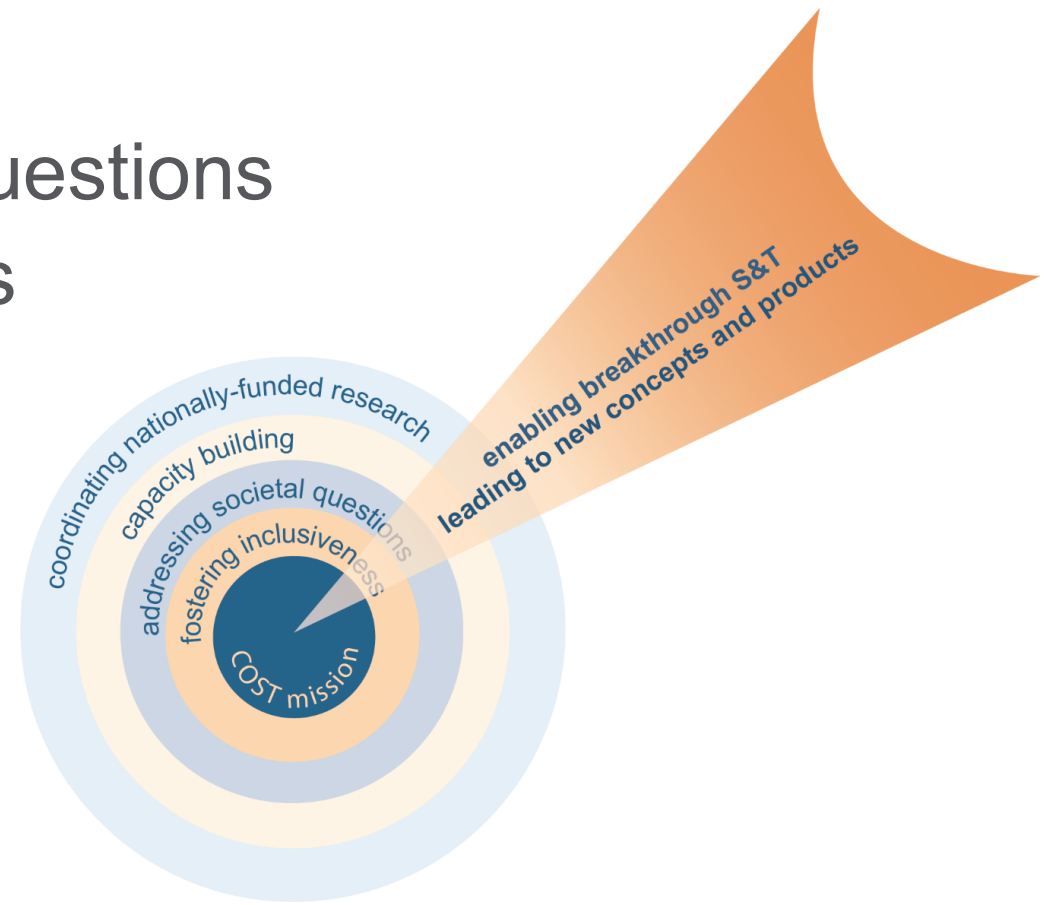
EUR 300 million budget (constant prices) for 7 years

Framework Partnership Agreement, FPA has been signed between the COST Association and the European Commission, duration 7 years

Financial commitment by **Specific Grant Agreements**, duration 1 year, with detailed description of the tasks to be done

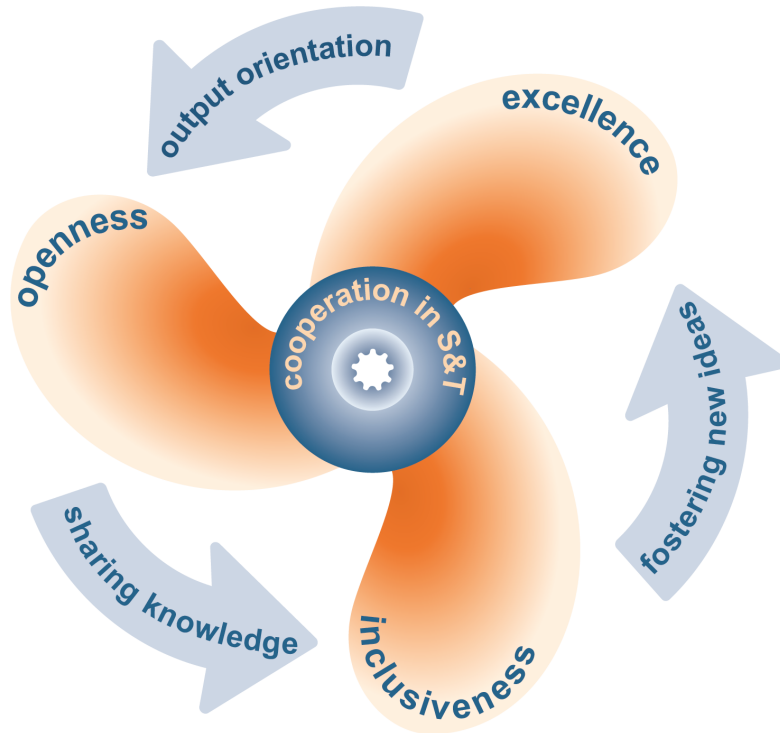
COST Objectives under H2020

- Joining research efforts and developing common S&T programmes
- Building capacity
- Addressing societal questions
- Strengthening COST's Inclusiveness Policy





To achieve these Objectives



COST Key Principles

- Supporting excellence
- Being open
- Being inclusive

COST Driving Forces

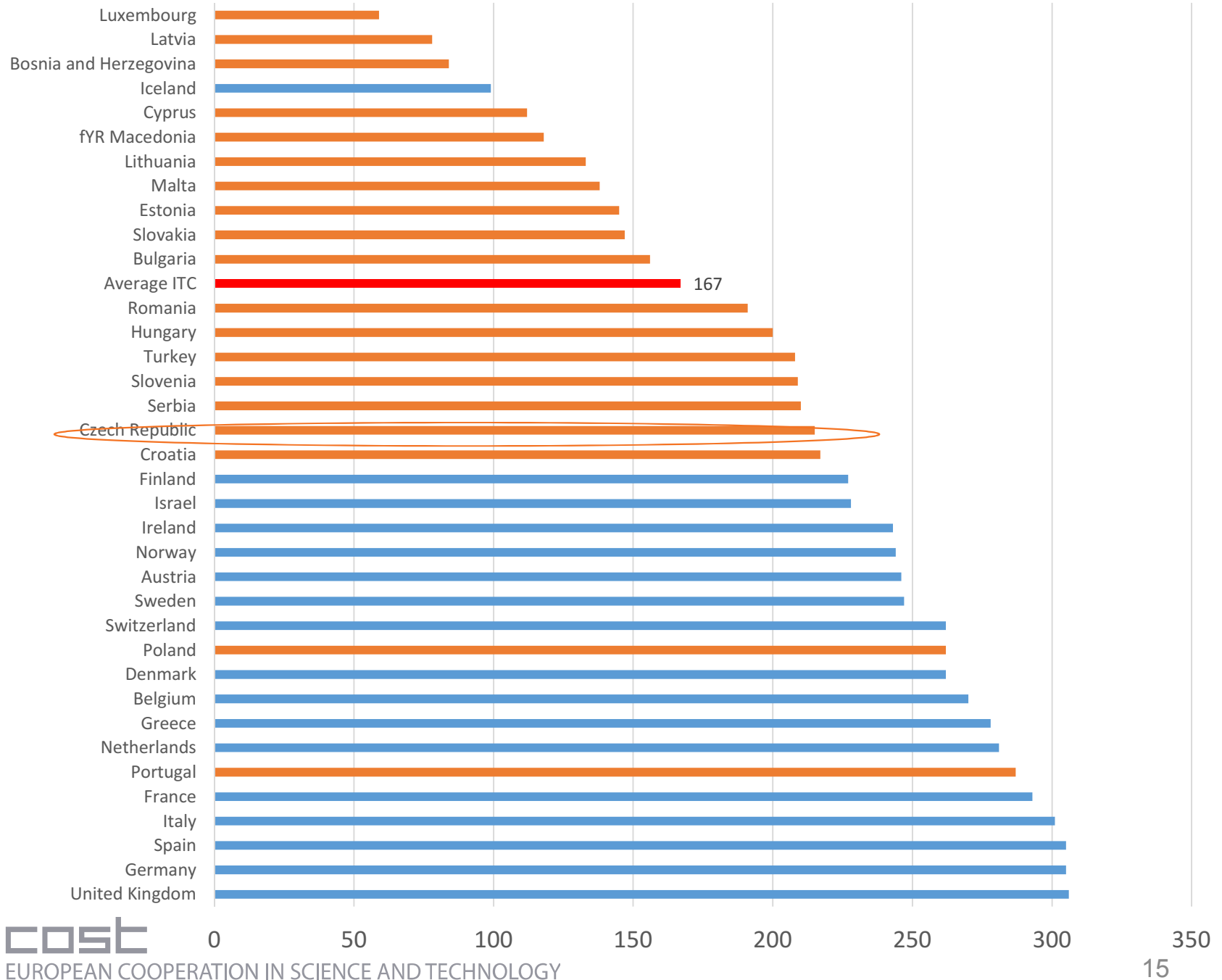
- Fostering new ideas
- Sharing knowledge
- Output orientation



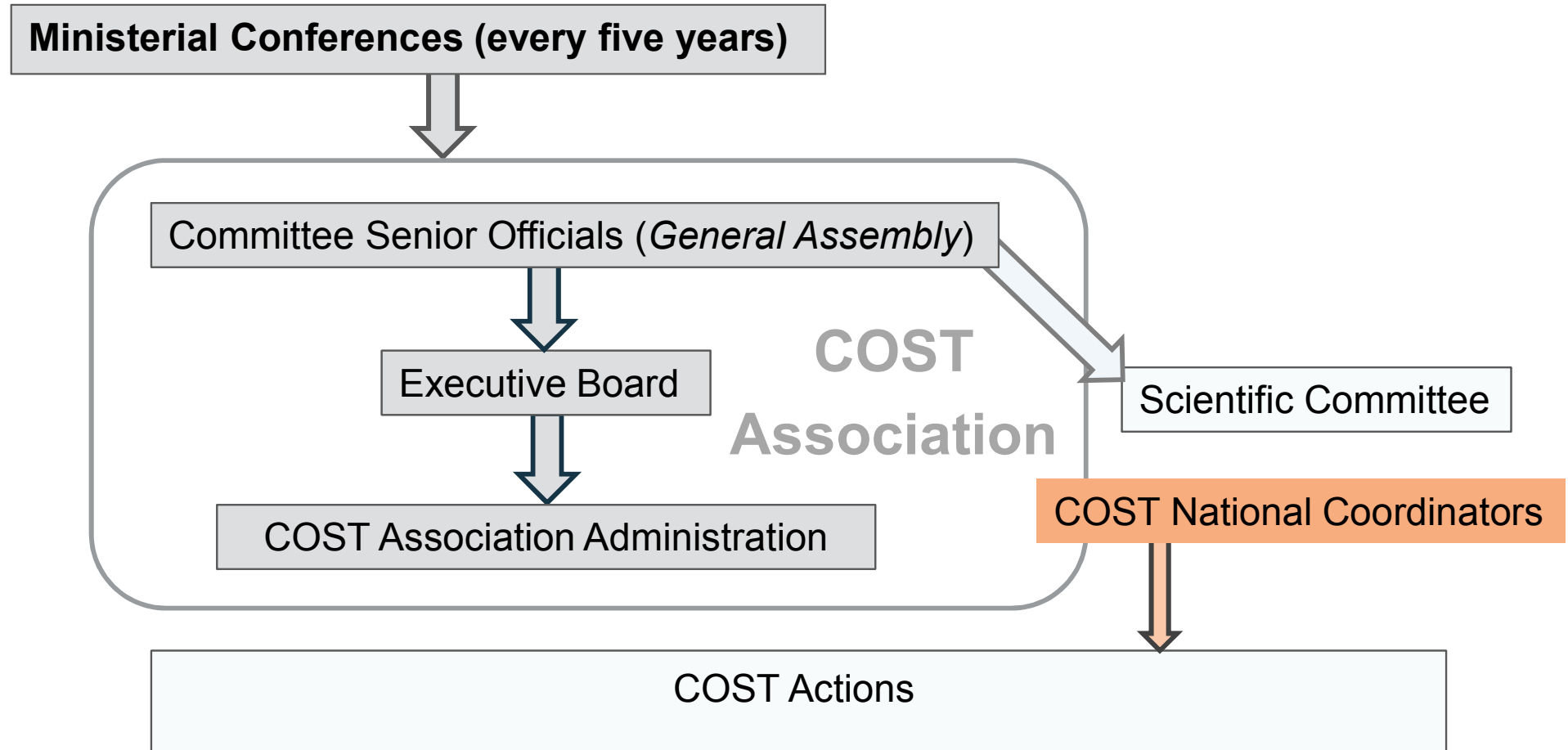
COST in key figures (2014)

- ❑ >350 Running Actions
- ❑ 30.000 European researchers involved in COST Actions' activities
- ❑ 18.000 participations in COST activities involving Early-Career Investigators (<PhD 8 years)
- ❑ 2550 Short-term Scientific Missions
- ❑ 4000 Trainees involved in training schools
- ❑ 8600 researchers involved in proposal in the last collection 2014-1 (845 eligible proposals – 40 funded)

COST Action participation



COST Association organisation and relation with other actors



Excellence & Inclusiveness

- Geographical coverage
- Early Career Investigators (ECR)
- Gender balance

Openness

- All fields of S&T
- All kind of participation
- Academia, SME/Industry, ...
- All countries



Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy

- Encouraging and enabling **excellent researchers** from less research-intensive countries across Europe to **set up, lead or join COST Actions**
- **Counterbalancing** research communities' unequal **access to knowledge infrastructures, funding and resources distribution**
- Contributing to the realization of Horizon 2020 Widening Pillar objectives through **COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy**



COST Inclusiveness Target Countries

COST Member Countries	
EU Member States	Associated Countries to Horizon 2020
Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Serbia, Turkey, Bosnia-Herzegovina

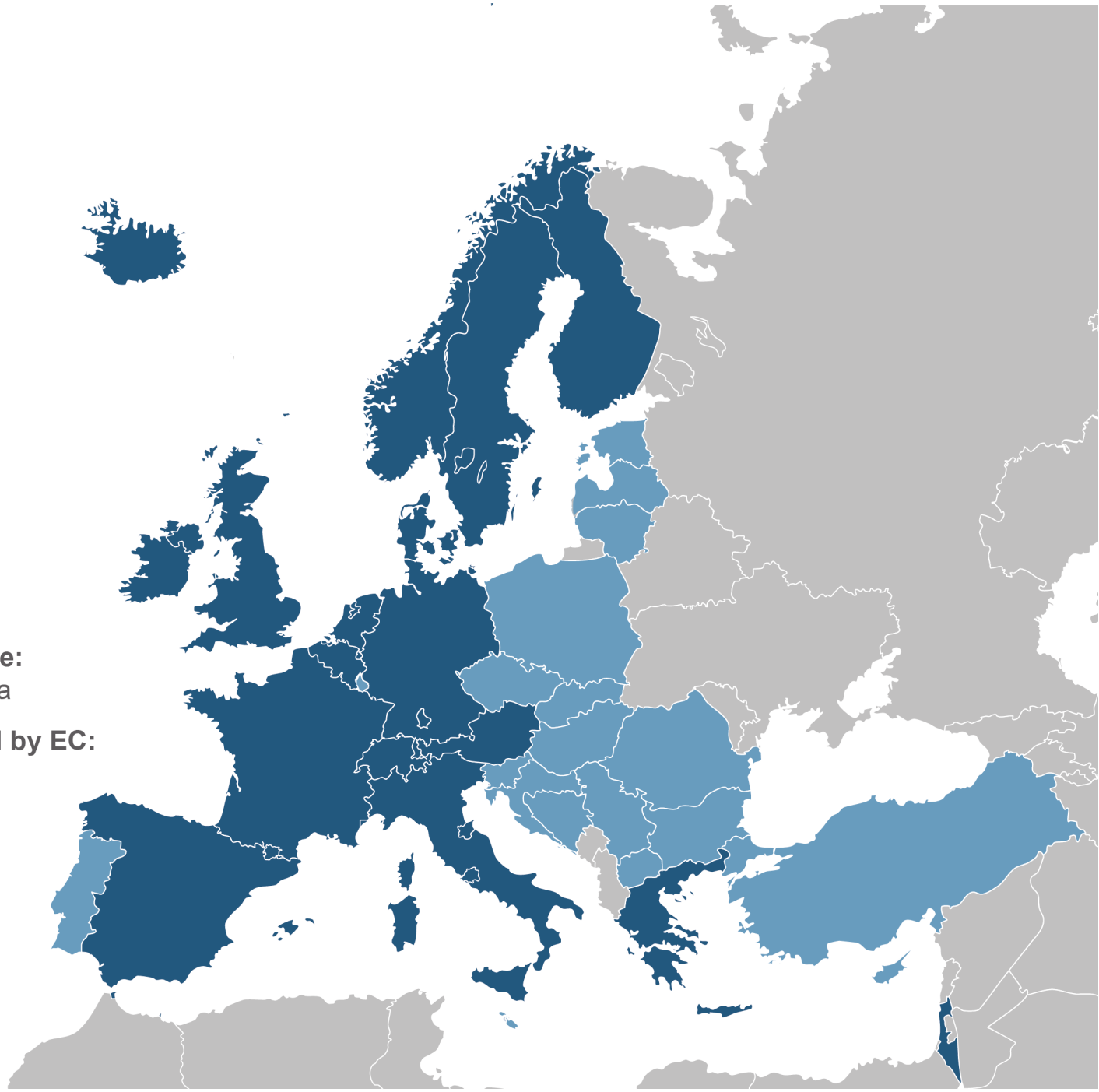
COST Inclusiveness Target Countries

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

EU Candidates:
fYR Macedonia
Republic of Serbia
Turkey

EU Potential Candidate:
Bosnia and Herzegovina

EU Countries targeted by EC:
Luxembourg
Portugal



Early Career Investigators

PhD* \leq 8 years

- Address the difficulty in gaining visibility and recognition European-wide
- Entrusting young investigators with leader roles under their own responsibility



**COST Inclusiveness
Policy supports
ECIs**

*PhD or equivalent experience

Gender Balance

male/female

- Encourage and enable under-represented gender to be intensively involved in all COST activities
- Networking the way to gender equality in science and technology



**COST Inclusiveness
Policy supports
Gender balance**



1) Within the COST frame

- Focus on activities strongly connected to promotion of COST and the opportunities it offers:
 - **Proposal evaluation:**
 - motivating researchers to undertake scientific evaluator role.
 - monitoring the geographical balance, as well as age and gender dimensions of Independent External Experts selected for evaluating proposals
 - **Communication:** Awareness raising and reinforced communication within COST Info Days organised in Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs)



2) COST Action lifetime

Focus on activities to be implemented within the COST Actions themselves:

- Encouragement of researchers targeted of this policy to leadership role in the Action: **Action Chair, Vice-Chair, Working Group leader**
- Encouragement of institutions from ITC countries gaining experience in management of international research projects enabled and trained (**Acting as grant holders**)
- **Customised networking tools**, such as STMSs and Training schools dedicated to Inclusiveness Target Countries' researchers
- **Promotion of meeting locations** in ITCs
- **Balanced representation of COST Action rapporteurs** from each COST Country ensured
- **COST Actions Monitoring/Final Assessment** adapted to help follow-up how COST Actions fulfilling COST Policies
- **Strategic initiatives:** Meeting locations for events under Strategic Initiatives preferably identified and chosen in ITCs



3) Following the closure of the COST Action

Activities

- **Data gathering** on COST Actions' outputs and outcomes to assess the impact of the networking activities
 - including the identification and development of tailored KPIs and their analysis
- **Industry-focused events** aimed at increasing the visibility and impact of COST and of COST Actions
 - specifically in the industry and SME arena participated in and/or co-organisation by COST
- **Final Action Publications**
 - compendia detailing Actions' overall results published and/or disseminated after the Action has ended

