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[Lecture]

Review of the COST networking activities - modifications of the rules and introduction of new opportunities for ITC participants

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Abstract: Serbia is a full member of COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology), the oldest intergovernmental organization in Europe that aims to establish research networks among scientists and innovators (Marinković et al., 2022). COST actions are designed to ensure networking opportunities for researchers and include a wide range of activities and grants that help individuals establish new collaborations, developing joint research topics, and supporting scientific and personal career development. Many researchers view COST as an extremely valuable European funding instrument due to its unique people-centered approach, which prioritizes researchers over institutions. Serbia belongs to the group of Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC) whose researchers have additional mechanisms at their disposal for financing activities within COST networks (Mijić and Marinković, 2024). During the four-year lifetime of the COST action, there are many instruments available to researchers, and some of the most frequently used will be introduced in detail, such as organizing workshops and meetings, short-term scientific missions (STSMs), training schools, conference grants, communication and dissemination grants, and virtual mobility grants. Particular focus will be on available participation opportunities for young researchers and innovators and the introduction of novel COST rules, such as a limit of working group membership coming into force as of November

2026. A brief review of recently approved COST research networks and available leading positions will be presented together with a description of new procedures and limitations for submitting action proposals within the current open call OC2026. These rules mandate that young researchers must make up at least 40% of the COST action composition, and an individual researcher can participate as a secondary proposer in only one new action proposal.

Keywords: science inclusiveness, action networking tools, mobility and visibility

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