

Brussels, 13 April 2018

COST 046/18

DECISION

Subject: **Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the COST Action “Constitution-making and deliberative democracy” (Deliberative Constitution-Making) CA17135**

The COST Member Countries and/or the COST Cooperating State will find attached the Memorandum of Understanding for the COST Action Constitution-making and deliberative democracy approved by the Committee of Senior Officials through written procedure on 13 April 2018.



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

For the implementation of a COST Action designated as

COST Action CA17135 CONSTITUTION-MAKING AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY (Deliberative Constitution-Making)

The COST Member Countries and/or the COST Cooperating State, accepting the present Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) wish to undertake joint activities of mutual interest and declare their common intention to participate in the COST Action (the Action), referred to above and described in the Technical Annex of this MoU.

The Action will be carried out in accordance with the set of COST Implementation Rules approved by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), or any new document amending or replacing them:

- a. "Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities" (COST 132/14 REV2);
- b. "COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval" (COST 133/14 REV);
- c. "COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment" (COST 134/14 REV2);
- d. "COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations Participation" (COST 135/14 REV).

The main aim and objective of the Action is to bring together multiple actors who have been or are or want to be involved in deliberative constitution-making. Together, they will generate different sets of possible procedures with the intent to conduct side-by-side experiments with comparisons in the hopes of settling on optimal deliberative procedures.. This will be achieved through the specific objectives detailed in the Technical Annex.

The economic dimension of the activities carried out under the Action has been estimated, on the basis of information available during the planning of the Action, at EUR 68 million in 2017.

The MoU will enter into force once at least seven (7) COST Member Countries and/or COST Cooperating State have accepted it, and the corresponding Management Committee Members have been appointed, as described in the CSO Decision COST 134/14 REV2.

The COST Action will start from the date of the first Management Committee meeting and shall be implemented for a period of four (4) years, unless an extension is approved by the CSO following the procedure described in the CSO Decision COST 134/14 REV2.

OVERVIEW

Summary

In Europe and across the world, several countries are turning to deliberative democracy to reform their constitutions, and in many others this question is high on the political agenda. Such transformation also shuffles quite radically the role of the citizenry regarding constitutional changes. Traditionally such changes are the sole responsibility of elected officials, in collaboration with experts. With the deliberative turn, many more actors may be involved in the designing of constitutions: citizens both individually and collectively in the forms of informal associations, social movements, civil society organisations, participatory consultants and research teams. The Main Aim of the Action is to bring together all these actors – who are usually not in contact – to discuss and reflect on this democratic challenge, not only in terms of normative ideals but also and above all on the empirical challenges raised by this complex and multi-faceted democratic transformation.

Because the focus of ConstDeb is on constitutions and deliberative democracy, the Action itself as a network is intended to work in a deliberative fashion.

This action has three research coordination objectives:

1. *To gather and organize information about all deliberative democracy experiments related to constitution-like issues, research and writing about constitutional deliberative democracy, and the actors involved in both;*
2. *To make this information widely available and widely used;*
3. *To promote interaction between actors involved in this area, and also interested actors who are not yet involved.*

The primary vehicle to achieve these objectives will be a deliberative portal.

<p>Areas of Expertise Relevant for the Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political Science: Political systems and institutions, governance ● Political Science: Democratization, social movements ● Law: Legal theory, legal systems, constitutions, comparative law 	<p>Keywords</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Democracy ● Deliberation ● Constitution ● Citizens ● Participation
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Specific Objectives

To achieve the main objective described in this MoU, the following specific objectives shall be accomplished:

Research Coordination

- To gather and organize information about all deliberative democracy experiments related to constitution-like issues, research and writing about constitutional deliberative democracy, and the actors involved in both.
- To make this information widely available and widely used.
- To promote interaction between actors involved in this area, and also interested actors who are not yet

involved.

Capacity Building

- To promote the inclusion of actors from countries that traditionally have not participated in such networks or where research in this field is less developed.
- To reach further than the well-known specialists of the deliberative democracy in Europe and elsewhere.
- To pay a special attention on the ground, i.e. in the actual implementation of deliberative democracy, to minority groups.
- To foster new research avenues and new collaborations.

TECHNICAL ANNEX

1. S&T EXCELLENCE

1.1. CHALLENGE

1.1.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE CHALLENGE (MAIN AIM)

This Action brings together multiple actors who have been or are or want to be involved in deliberative constitution-making. Together, they will generate **different sets of possible procedures** with the intent to conduct side-by-side experiments with comparisons in the hopes of settling on optimal deliberative procedures. Their objective is to answer questions such as is it better to divide into small discussion groups, should the process encourage opinion sharing, or limit early deliberation to agreeing on questions to ask witnesses, should the group devise its own rules, or have a separate mini-public devise rules and procedures? Different actors have different ideas about the best approach. We need real world experiments designed to compare approaches since lifting lessons from one-off implementations is never comparing apples to apples.

The background of the Actions is the observation that in Europe and across the world, several countries are turning to **deliberative democracy to reform their constitutions**, and in many others this question is high on the political agenda. Europe is at the centre of this democratic transformation, which takes place in the wake of a larger worldwide so-called deliberative democracy turn, that is giving a deliberative flavour to political decision making. Deliberative democracy incorporates two “dimensions”:

- the **participants** who are involved (incorporating ordinary citizens, civil society organizations, mini-publics, and people from marginalized groups, instead of restricting participation to political elites, experts, and other traditional actors)
- the kind of **interaction** they have with each other (open dialogue, search for mutual understanding and potential consensus, instead of interest-based bargaining, party-based adversarialism, and other traditional forms of decision making)

This transformation, which is contested, is a key challenge for any democratic country in general and particularly in Europe, where constitutional experiments have been recently run and others are in preparation. Constitutions are the cornerstones of our democracies and reforming them means digging into the core mechanics of our political regimes. Such transformation also shuffles quite radically the role of the citizenry regarding constitutional changes. Traditionally such changes are the sole responsibility of elected officials, in collaboration with experts. With the deliberative turn, many more actors may be involved in the designing of constitutions: citizens both individually and collectively in the forms of informal associations, social movements, civil society organisations, participatory consultants and research teams.

The **aim of this Action is to bring together all these actors** – who are usually not in contact – to discuss and reflect on this democratic challenge, not only in terms of normative ideals but also and above all on the empirical challenges raised by this complex and multi-faceted democratic transformation. Of course, each example of constitution-making may have its genesis in a particular time and place. Nonetheless, they may also serve as cognitive models for other events and foster reflections useful for other contexts. In fact, four main transversal questions (choices that are made and their consequences) are raised by this challenge:

1. The design of Constitutional deliberative democracy and its consequences;
2. The link(s) between the mini-public (i.e. the deliberative forum) and the maxi-public (i.e. the whole society);

3. The integration of minority groups;
4. The use of electronic tools in deliberative constitutional making.

The key output of this unique and diverse network will be a **handbook/toolkit of constitutional deliberative processes**: that is concise, accessible tools that would capture good practices and challenges about how to mitigate them.

1.1.2. RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS

Today, public authorities, research teams as well as civil society organisations and even individuals have taken and/or observe a deliberative turn, driven by increasing public disengagement and a growing sense of distrust between the public and their representatives. From small-scale experiments, these deliberative events have recently taken a constitutional turn, at least in Europe, i.e. they deal with issues that concern the core of a political regime. In recent years, Iceland and Ireland have turned to deliberative democracy to reform their constitutions. Estonia, Luxembourg and Romania have also experienced constitutional processes in a deliberative mode. In Belgium, the G1000 (a citizens-led initiative of deliberative democracy) has fostered a wider societal debate about the role and place of citizens in the country's democracy. At the same time, the European Union institutions have introduced different forms of participatory and deliberative democracy as a way to connect the citizens back in, such as the Citizen dialogues or the European citizens' initiatives (ECI). These empirical cases are emblematic of a possible constitutional turn in deliberative democracy in Europe. In other European countries, like Italy, the UK or The Netherlands, deliberative experiments are in the making. The objective of this Action is to bring together all the actors involved in these constitutional deliberative democracy processes.

Most European countries have now experienced some forms of deliberative democracy. They represent a number of forms including deliberative constitutional reforms (i.e. constitutional reform initiated via deliberative democracy procedures – not only representative democracy and/or direct democracy) and also constitutional mini-publics (that are organized to deliberate about articles of the Constitution) but also deliberative democracy on issues that are not directly related to constitutional changes but to the nature of democracy in a polity (e.g. whether it becomes more participatory and/or deliberative) or state-wide issues. All these experiments have or could be analysed individually through case studies or small-N studies. Yet, in a deliberative systems approach, the focus should be on how these experiments fit into the larger political system.

This calls now for a large pan-European network where such experiments from the field can be presented and discussed with all the actors involved in order to take stock of what's going on in each country and to gain from interdisciplinary and inter-actor reflections and exchanges of practices. Today an additional challenge is the difficulty and costs of gathering data and people, given the wide variety of actors and experiments and, many times, the difficulty of access to them. So, it is common that similar experiments take place in different countries (sometimes in the same country), following different standards and objectives. Obviously, this dispersion does not contribute to the creation of a solid foundation for the development of the field and a better understanding of democratic dynamics across Europe.

Therefore, the goal of this Action is to connect the efforts, somehow dispersed in so many different attempts, under a stable pan-European network that facilitates 1) the construction of a **comprehensive image of the current state of the experiments** ran throughout Europe which can be used as a foundation to build bridges among the different approaches and actors; 2) the **sharing and standardization of existing practices**, as well as their extension and the creation of new datasets through joint data gathering. All these activities will be directed to promote the development of new research projects and collaborations between the different kind of actors that contribute to the consolidation of existing knowledge about democracy and constitutions in Europe.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. RESEARCH COORDINATION OBJECTIVES

COST offers an optimal framework for networking and capacity-building in an Action in which Europe can and must take the lead because some European countries are at the fore front of this new way of thinking about – and potentially changing – constitutions. This Action will unify numerous but scattered experiments and resources across Europe, across actors and across disciplines. This action has three research coordination objectives:

1. To gather and organize information about all deliberative democracy experiments related to constitution-like issues, research and writing about constitutional deliberative democracy, and the actors involved in both;
2. To make this information widely available and widely used;
3. To promote interaction between actors involved in this area, and also interested actors who are not yet involved.

The primary vehicle to achieve these objectives will be a deliberative online portal. This portal will enable elected officials, public servants, political parties, interest groups, civil society organisations, researchers and citizens to (1) easily share information about an experience they know of, (2) fill in extra information about a given experience in a Wiki process (in line with the Participedia project that catalogues participatory processes across the world, but this Action will have a specific focus on deliberative democracy and constitutions), (3) search for and find experiments in deliberative democracy, with information on their context, setting, process, actors and results, (4) get in contact with their actors, (5) foster deliberations within and between the actors. This Action will work towards these objectives through the following activities:

- creating the deliberative portal in order to share data on deliberative constitution-making;
- identifying commonalities and differences in the schemes for designing democratic processes;
- developing cutting edge theoretical analysis to inform future deliberative events;
- encouraging and participating in the development of new methods and techniques of deliberative democracy;
- sharing experimental methodologies and devising common analytical frameworks;
- producing deliverables that can be useful not only to the research community but more largely to any interested stakeholders;
- promoting awareness and use of the portal among the European public;
- encouraging deliberation within the network and outside of the network;
- automatically monitoring the use of the portal for resource access and use of its content;
- assessing its impact in terms of new knowledge and methods/techniques that it makes possible.

The Action relies on the participation of **multiple actors**, belonging to different disciplines and from different geographical areas. It will be open for extension and adaption to still others. Bringing together people with different theoretical and applied backgrounds, this Action will encourage the creation of an innovative unified network for the study of deliberative democracy in relation to constitutions in Europe, thus fostering mutually-enabling research. This will benefit senior and especially junior researchers but also all the stakeholders involved in the Action, who will find comparable documentation and recommendations for their own work as well as a network that is conducive to deliberation about these issues.

1.2.2. CAPACITY-BUILDING OBJECTIVES

The **first capacity-building objective** is to promote the inclusion of actors from Countries that traditionally have not participated in such networks or where research in this field is less developed. In these countries, deliberative democracy is also used or could be usefully used. Therefore, it is a key objective of this Action to be as far-reaching as possible in Europe. One obstacle for the actors in some of these countries (most of them included in the group of Inclusiveness Target countries) is the lack of access to international networks due to insufficient funding or infrastructure. The Action aims at providing opportunities for these actors to join forces with and learn from actors in other countries and thus enable mutually beneficial exchanges.

The **second capacity-building objective**, in line with the coordination objective, is to reach further than the well-known specialists of the deliberative democracy in Europe and elsewhere. While some these scholars are among the network of proposers, the objective is definitely to bring new blood into this community, also in terms of early career researchers, women and minority groups, and to expand it much beyond academia. The Action will strive hard to be as inclusive as possible of any actors involved in deliberative democracy. In fact, lots of experiments today are the products of joint ventures between civil society organisations and research teams, or public authorities and research teams. This Action will pursue this dynamic and expand it systematically.

The **third capacity-building objective** builds on the two previous above-mentioned objectives: it is to pay a special attention on the ground, i.e. in the actual implementation of deliberative democracy, to minority groups. Inclusiveness is a key objective both for deliberative democracy theorists and for the proposers of this Action; therefore, it has to be echoed in practice. This is the reason why a specific working group will be devoted to minorities.

The **fourth and final capacity-building objective** follows the first three objectives and is to foster new research avenues and new collaborations. In line with the coordination objective, the Action will provide support for the design of new cooperative pan-European endeavours. This support will be particularly oriented to methodological elaborations and the design of common analytical frameworks, to be used in extensive comparative research projects. What's more, this interdisciplinary network will also give birth to cross-cutting inter-disciplinary collaboration, breaking new grounds about democracy and its evolution.

In this respect, the Action will support a number of measures aiming explicitly at instilling these four capacity-building objectives within the network (workshops, deliberations and common publications) and outside the network (deliverables, public events and the portal).

1.3. PROGRESS BEYOND THE STATE-OF-THE-ART AND INNOVATION POTENTIAL

1.3.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE-OF-THE-ART

In its essence, deliberative democracy is concerned with building and engaging with authentic and reasoned debate in order to decide on a course of action. In other words, if it is deliberative, it is inclusive and consequential (Dryzek 2009). Deliberation can take place in mini-publics, parliaments and among the masses, and there are many high profile real-world examples of innovations in deliberative democracy (Smith 2009), notably: the participatory budgeting practices that originated in Brazil (Souza 2001); the deliberative polling exercises that have been applied widely (Fishkin 2009); the long tradition in Scandinavia of citizens deliberations about complex issues at the intersection between science and society (Rose et al 2010), to name but a few. All share common features: they are based on some form of deliberation among samples of citizens; they aim to foster positive and constructive thinking about solutions (they are not simply protest movements); they seek genuine debate about policy content; they seek solutions beyond adversarial politics; and they seek to identify common ground. There is a cross-fertilization of existing models and techniques and a rising number of experiments that combine traditional modes of political participation with some elements of deliberation. This deliberative turn is now transforming constitution making and we face what can be seen as a critical juncture.

Modern constitution making started in the late eighteenth century. Elster (1995) describes seven waves of constitution making across Europe and North America as well as in their former colonies throughout the world. Many of these cases of constitutional revision have three common characteristics. First, they were instigated as a response to crisis or exceptional circumstances. This is what Ackerman (1998) refers to as a constitutional moment, which mobilises societal forces for fundamental change. Elster (1995) counts only two exceptions where constitutions were set under non-crisis circumstances, Sweden in 1974 and Canada in 1982. All others were in response to economic crisis regime change or revolution. Second, all involved to varying extents the deliberation of elites. Third, many of the recent bouts of constitution making have not resulted in long lived documents (Kellermann et al. 2001; Albi 2005; Ginsburg and Dixon 2011).

The current cases, such as Iceland and Ireland, while they are also a product of crisis and the diminishing trust in institutions among European publics, have directly included citizens, not only political elites, in constitution-making (and not only the final stage of approval). It is possible that the mode of deliberation of this new wave can be distinguished from all previous waves in terms of who was deliberating and how they were doing so (Reuchamps and Suiter 2016).

What's more, studies of deliberative constitution-making have often focused on one-shot experiments or sometimes on a comparison of a few similar experiments (Fournier et al. 2011). Parkinson and Mansbridge (2012) among other deliberative democracy analysts call for a deliberative systems approach: the focus should not be only on individual sites of deliberation but on the whole system and on its interrelations. This is why we argue a COST Action should be devoted to the current – and future – reforms of constitutions in Europe and elsewhere and if and/or how deliberative democracy contributes in these processes, in a systemic approach.

1.3.2. PROGRESS BEYOND THE STATE-OF-THE-ART

Previous rounds of constitutions making involved the deliberation of elites, principally constitutional lawyers, senior politicians and so on, who populated the deliberative component of such assemblies from the framers of the US Constitution to the Assembly in post-revolutionary France. In most cases, decisions were reached by a simple majority of the delegates, although a few aimed at something close to consensus, for example, the making of the 1949 German Constitution and the 1978 Spanish Constitution (Elster, 1995). In recent instances, however, constitution-making included roles not only for

elites, but also for citizens (Fishkin 2011; Wheatley and Mendez 2013). What is crucial in terms of constitutional deliberative democracy is that in cases that we currently witness the central core is an attempt at **directly involving the public**.

Essentially constitutions, as the supreme norm which shapes legitimate law-making must be normatively legitimate if citizens are to obey (Dworkin 1995). There is agreement that deliberative democracy is primarily focused on producing legitimate political outcomes (Manin 1987; Cohen 1998; Rawls 1999). Thus introducing elements of deliberative democracy to constitution making ought to make changes increasingly legitimate. In addition, as Elster (1995) notes creating a constitution involves making collective choices under constraints, that is they are the work of a constituent assembly rather than individuals. Thus we would expect deliberative democracy to be appropriate for constitution making in that it will lend greater legitimacy, and be based on collective discussions. However, **these are normative arguments – not shared by every actor – and above all they should be empirically tested and discussed by all relevant actors themselves**. They call for a combined research endeavour bridging together theoretical claims and empirical validations. There is a growing body of empirical research but mostly based on single case studies. Thus this Action brings together researchers who not only have studied but also who have been involved themselves, along with non-academic actors, in the organization of constitutional deliberative democracy experiments and/or in their analysis. This Action will include three working groups (described below); each one will coordinate efforts to progress beyond the state of the art in its area of focus and offer a comparative appraisal of the dynamics at stake.

1.3.3. INNOVATION IN TACKLING THE CHALLENGE

The first innovation in tackling the challenge of constitution-making through deliberative democracy is **to do it in a deliberative way** itself. This Action relies on the will to bring together all actors involved in this question and to run the network as a continuing deliberation, notably through the deliberative portal. It does not mean however mere endless talking but instead gathering actors who often do not speak with one another, because they come from different disciplines, countries or because they share different – even opposed – views about the issue. In doing so, special attention will be devoted to incorporating all relevant actors, including actors from minority groups, in line with the first two capacity-building objectives.

This Action is not only innovative in terms of procedures. It also aims at **substantive innovations**. These will be the result of the above mentioned procedural innovation. While it is always difficult to anticipate its specific content, substantive innovation will be achieved in four interrelated areas:

- *New theoretical developments*: the Action intends to serve as a platform to stimulate not only the analysis of existing data and experiments but also the generation of new ones resulting from the synergies created between the actors through the Action.
- *New research and development capacities*: the Action will produce new research and development capacities that could turn into both internationally managed data infrastructures and new comparative projects, on the one hand, and locally applied methods and techniques in real-life projects, on the other hand.
- *Development of multi-actors collaboration*: This will be a major innovation of the Action. This Action will not only facilitate the creation of synergies between all the actors involved in constitution-making through deliberative democracy resulting in a increased social impact, but also it will help to foster innovation in theory and in practice, leading to the creation of new research and development capacities. Besides, trust bonds between all the actors will have positive effect on the possibility of all actors to reach new horizons because of this rather original multi-actors collaboration.

Production and distribution of usable knowledge for stakeholders within but also outside of the network: the Action aims at being useful not only for its members but above all for all people interested in constitution-making and more generally in the evolution of democracy. To this end, the Action aims at producing and sharing the output of the works and reflections done by the network's members. The deliberative portal will definitely be a key asset in this strategy.

1.4. ADDED VALUE OF NETWORKING

1.4.1. IN RELATION TO THE CHALLENGE

In the study and the practice of deliberative democracy, networks have existed for quite some time but they often function in silos; that is that actors of the same type (researchers, on the one hand, and practitioners, on the other hand) or involved in the same experiment gather but they are rarely brought together systematically across geographic boundaries, disciplines and types/roles. However,

networking is the only effective way to tackle the challenge because of its multidimensionality. What is distinctive about the objectives of this Action is that they rely on engaging established scholars of constitutions, democratic institutions, deliberation, political behaviours and any disciplines that can feed the analysis of constitution-making through deliberative democracy, with younger researchers from various disciplines and with non-academic actors: elected officials, public servants, decision makers, civil society organisations. The range and complementarity of these fields and roles will ensure that the resulting resources meet the needs of all these actors and not only some categories of them. Achievement of the Action's objectives is made possible through collaboration and networking of key European nationally funded research teams that have acquired highly relevant expertise in the study of constitutions and of deliberative democracy, with actors that are involved in constitution-making. The group of actors involved in the Action will make use of joint networking and communication activities foreseen by COST. Discussion of the core research issues will take place at the Plenary Conferences and yearly workshops. Three Working Groups will be dedicated to specific thematic issues with information exchange in thematic seminars and meetings. They will bring together actors working on the same topic but with different theoretical and methodological backgrounds.

Training Schools, with a strong emphasis on early career researchers, and **Short Term Scientific Missions** will be organised to train and update Action members on the state of the art with respect to the topics treated in the three WGs and to introduce them to new findings and methods but also to existing experiments. The **Final Action Conference** will present the outcomes of the Action and devise plans for the future. In parallel, participants will undertake wide-scale and targeted communication activities (in addition to large mailing lists, snowball techniques will be used to reach all relevant actors, because in the massive load of information each actor gets every day it seems more effective to a communication that is individualized) to ensure continuing involvement of external actors in the use of the deliberative portal. In particular, internships will be organised to enable actors to visit other actors' projects. COST is the perfect vehicle to enable this 'internal' mobility, which is very valuable because it gives always a different insight to experience by oneself any particular democratic dynamic.

1.4.2. IN RELATION TO EXISTING EFFORTS AT EUROPEAN AND/OR INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The reasons for launching this Action concern both societal and scientific progress, and indirectly economic potential. Research on deliberative democracy has been increasing in the last decades and strongly established research networks do indeed already exist; for instance, the standing group on Democratic Innovations with the European Consortium of Political Research or networks of actors that have developed deliberative democracy processes, such as the Deliberative Democracy Consortium based in the USA but with members from all over the world. What is truly missing at this stage is a network that brings together all these actors. Networking and cooperation between these actors, across Europe and with international partners, are crucial to compile an inventory of existing processes and experiments and above all to reflect on them and share insights. Projects like Participedia, an online encyclopaedia, or the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy already provide lots of information about lots of existing processes. This Action, with an original focus on constitution-making processes, aims not only at building on these types of inventories (and people who have played a significant role in developing them support the creation of this Action) but also and above all at enabling discussions between the actors themselves. This is also an answer to the oft-heard, albeit legitimate, criticism that there are many valuable resources on the Internet that aren't used very much. The added value of the Action will be to build on these existing resources (it would be ineffective to start all over again) in order to result in a synergic integration of expertise and contributions coming from different theoretical, disciplinary and language perspectives. Future research, both on individual cases and especially on cross-cases, will enhance the empirical assessment of theoretically motivated hypotheses that can be useful to actors on the ground.

Hitherto, no COST Actions have sought to undertake the objectives of this Action. This proposed Action is however related to other Actions. The focus on the role of citizens in public choices echoes the objective of the Actions "Citizen Science to promote creativity, scientific literacy, and innovation throughout Europe" but the nature of the issues at stake is quite different. This Action builds also on the outputs from a past COST Action: "The True European Voter", with the same objective of being a truly pan-European network but with a focus not on election anymore but on constitution-making. This Action will seek to apply to calls within Horizon 2020: from coordinating existing research to producing together research, development and innovation.

Finally, all this demonstrate the common challenge faced by all praxis actors around deliberative democracy and constitution making: lack of overview over methods, purposes, limits, options, while the interest for deliberative constitution-making is rising across Europe. This is why this network is needed and can count on being appealing to heterogenous actors.

2. IMPACT

2.1. EXPECTED IMPACT

2.1.1. SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND/OR SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS

This Action will benefit stakeholders (elected officials, public servants, political parties, interest groups, civil society organisations, informal groups of citizens and individual citizens themselves) by coordinating and supporting the development of more collaboration between researchers and all these actors; by facilitating the learning of the many different experiments that are undertaken across Europe; by enabling the exchange of best practices and the deliberation about them and they can be used for adapting current democratic processes and/or for developing new processes; by aiming for deeper understanding of the stakes around constitution-making and deliberative democracy and bringing together people who do not share the same views. All this will help officials, and indirectly the general public via civil society organisations, to think about current democratic processes of constitution-making and potentially adapt them to the challenges of our time but also of their own context. The project will thus be enhancing the ability of interdisciplinary research to make a unique and significant impact on European democracies and their evolution.

In doing all this, the Action will have an *impact on general public*: via the dissemination/implementation capacity of involved civil society actors/networks and of elected representatives and civil servants. Collectively we are able to attract much media attention and disseminate in our own respective channels.

2.2. MEASURES TO MAXIMISE IMPACT

2.2.1. PLAN FOR INVOLVING THE MOST RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

In its core, this Action is built through the involvement of the stakeholders. The objective is to use our innovatively diverse and inclusive network to develop a **handbook/toolkit of constitutional deliberative processes** – they would use existing research as well as research from the working groups to develop concise, accessible tools that would capture good practice, challenges, how to mitigate them. They would help build capacity on such processes and disseminate the networks' findings to diverse audiences. In particular, public servants and civil society organisations (csos) would play a key dissemination role among their professional associations/community.

This is possible because of the **unique and innovative composition of our network** and its potential strength in terms of knowledge exchange across the different academic fields, countries as well as the different types of stakeholder. *A first series of workshops and events have paved the way to this Action. This project originated at a meeting in 2012 at the Irish Academy in Dublin, which coincided with the establishment of the Irish constitutional convention that brought together citizens and MPs. This first meeting brought together public servants, elected officials, journalists, civil society organisations and other groups of stakeholders. It progressed a few weeks later at a meeting organized by the G1000 and hosted by the Belgian Senate. This meeting included again people from civil society organisations and politicians in order to achieve a good mix of the practical and the theoretical.* From all these exchanges, an edited volume has come out (ECPR Press 2016), but this is tip of the iceberg, as these meetings have allowed new ties to between a great variety of actors. Indeed, the Action endeavours to facilitate the co-production of knowledge, for example through shared good practice in this area, by harnessing their evidence and experiences for dissemination to the wider public and other stakeholders. What's more, our proposed network will investigate all 'generational' aspects of the deliberative democratic project: theoretical/normative; empirical; praxis; and the systemic element.

The Action can thus rely on a strong experience of involving the most relevant stakeholders. However, specific methods of engaging with each group of stakeholders are needed since each has its own particular characteristics, and poses various challenges.

- **Elected officials:** they are the traditional decision-makers, thus reaching them is highly relevant but not easy. There are two challenges in doing so: willingness and time. For the former, at first, elected officials tend to be either sceptical or afraid of this issue, but meetings and presentations of existing experiments elsewhere often allow for insightful collaborations. Time-constraint is perhaps more difficult to solve, but it can be worked out with individual meetings and for collective meetings using existing time slots (for instance, meetings of parliamentary groups). In other words, instead of having them out of Parliament, our strategy will be to go in Parliament. Our experience shows that some elected representatives are comfortable with and in fact promote deliberative democratic approaches,

and will work as bridge to convince others. It is not a fringe topic everywhere and there are certainly electoral cards to be played for a number of elected representatives linked with showing interests in deliberative approaches. For instance, we are in touch with representatives of the Venice Commission, specialized in democracy and constitution-making.

- **Public servants** are also an important stakeholders' group but one that is often forgotten. However, they are definitely key actors of democratic processes as they are the ones who 'control' them. Adding innovations in existing processes is typically seen with some legitimate fear by public servants. Yet, representatives at different administrative levels (local, regional, national, European, transnational) have various degrees of openness through which experiences can trickle and disseminate. Previous experiments show that once better informed (for instance through specific training workshops) about such democratic innovations, public servants are often quite enthusiastic but also very good at explaining how to fine-tune them.
- **Practitioners** (for instance consultants who design and practice deliberative experiments) do not do the same job as researchers (who are rather involved in their theoretical conception or their evaluation) but often they know each other. The challenge is to have them talk together because their objectives may be quite different. To do so, this Action will organise mixed workshops with practitioners and researchers, in a deliberative fashion, in order to enable mutual understanding and thus renewed and improved collaborations.
- **Civil society organisations** are very diverse: they can be very formalized with a specific objective or quite broad relying on an informal group of citizens. Some of them are directly involved in promoting deliberative democracy. Others are 'recipients' of democratic processes. This Action will reach them in various manners: with those directly involved, similar techniques to practitioners can be used; for less directly engaged, methods such as *world cafés* (that allows for participants to learn and discuss about different projects) both face-to-face and online.

In order to foster this multi-actors collaboration, all stakeholders will be involved in all WGs, and not in a specific 'stakeholders' WG.

2.2.2. DISSEMINATION AND/OR EXPLOITATION PLAN

There is a clear and attainable plan for dissemination, as it will be a key part of the Action:

1. *Creation of the portal.* It will include all relevant information about the Action – content, participants, activities, results – as well as a wiki-made panorama of existing deliberative constitution-making processes, with opportunities to deliberate about them.
2. *Creation of a biannual newsletter* and institutional profiles of the Action in most relevant *social networks*. These profiles will enhance the visibility of the Action for researchers (and possibly early stage researchers), stakeholders and the general public.
3. *Organization of workshops and conferences* bringing together actors of the Action as well as international partners. These events could be organized with other institutions or associations.
4. *Dissemination events:* presentations of the results of the project in high profile European or other international conferences organized by disciplinary or interdisciplinary scientific associations but also deliberative events such as *world cafés* in order to reach stakeholders.
5. *Participation in international conferences:* members will present their research papers, projects and collaborations in high profile or subject-specific international conferences.
6. *Publications:* members of the Action will submit joint papers to disciplinary and interdisciplinary international peer-reviewed journals in order to gain a broad academic audience. A number of special issues and books will be also the results of this network.
7. *Contacts with media:* participants will be encouraged to publicize the Action, its activities and results through their media outlets. Both tradition and social medias will be used to foster a larger societal debate about current democratic transformations and innovations.
8. *Working papers and 'white/green' papers:* as the Action builds on interaction between practitioners and researchers, not all results from the Action are intended for publication but instead are to be used by the general or specialized public – these documents will be made accessible through the portal.
9. *Common datasets:* lots of data will be collected as a consequence of this intense networking. The Action will encourage datasets produced under the Action's umbrella are made available to all participants and above all the general public in order to offer sources of inspiration.

Above all, the **handbook/toolkit of constitutional deliberative processes will be a key output and published in open-access via the portal.**

2.3. POTENTIAL FOR INNOVATION VERSUS RISK LEVEL

2.3.1. POTENTIAL FOR SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL AND/OR SOCIOECONOMIC INNOVATION BREAKTHROUGHS

The Action sets out a number of ambitious objectives along with an extensive set of coherent implementation and dissemination measures. This will lead to scientific innovation. A realistic assessment of its potential for scientific and socioeconomic innovation will necessarily locate it in the Action's nature as a solid platform – notably through the portal – aimed at promoting synergies between scholars and all stakeholders involved in constitution-making in order to foster new research endeavours and avenues of collaboration between academia and society.

Beside (and even before) new common research endeavours, this Action seeks to foster social and political innovation. It is the main objective of this Action to bring together actors who usually do not communicate well and much with one another. Yet, this Action offers both face-to-face and online opportunities for all these actors to get in contact and therefore reflect, design and assess existing or new democratic processes. Such jointly-thought processes are much needed in European societies as too often top-down processes undertaken by one or a few actors meet fierce resistance from the others. This Action will not provide blue-print solutions applicable to all cases but it has much potential for innovation breakthroughs, as it will be a network conducive to expertise and experiences sharing between all actors.

Furthermore from these exchanges and collaborations that will lead to the actual design or the analysis of constitution-making processes will come out technological innovations. The designing of such processes often entails the development of specific communication and deliberation tools to facilitate both face-to-face and online deliberation. However, and given the willingness to set the Action in a bottom-up (rather than a top-down) approach, though such general areas of innovative outputs may be identified, anticipating any *specific* technological and purely economic innovations or breakthroughs arising from the Action, though tempting, is not possible at this stage. Indeed, we could a priori suggest that the Action would seek to develop a tool enabling both face-to-face and online deliberation in the meantime and in a multilingual fashion, but only if the actors do need such a tool; our intention is to follow their needs instead of imposing a specific innovation.

The Objectives and the Implementation section set out a number of relevant innovations and the ambition of this Action is to be a network conducive of innovations. The implementation of the Action is designed in this perspective.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK PLAN

3.1.1. DESCRIPTION OF WORKING GROUPS

Three Working Groups will structure the Action. They will work in parallel, with interconnections between the different research and networking efforts. In addition to the Plenary Action Conferences where progress in the different WGs will be monitored, a number of joint WG meetings are planned when research is interdependent. As main vehicles of delivering the scientific work plan, the three WGs are responsible for the coordination of the three research areas covering the different aspects of the Action and in order to foster a coherent network the deliverables will be prepared in collaboration between the WGs. One major innovation in the structure of this Action is that stakeholders are not involved in the typical 'scholars-stakeholders WG' but they are instead included in all WGs.

WG Constitution-making and deliberative Democracy: Theories and practices

Constitutional reform is increasingly understood as needing civic engagement of some form in order to be legitimate. In this, the participatory dimension of constitutional democracy is being stressed as crucial in the process of re-writing the foundational rules of a political community. One particularly prominent way of engaging citizens is by means of public deliberative gatherings in which fundamental values of the constitution as well as concrete topics for reform are discussed. Beyond deliberative practices in constitutional reform procedures, constitutional reform can also in substance institutionalize deliberative instruments. In theoretical and normative terms, however, different issues arise with the deliberative engagement of citizens in constitutional reform, relating to the knowledge involved, the procedures to be followed, and the forms of representation and legitimation that deliberation entails.

Regarding the **knowledge** involved in processes of constitutional reform, distinctive ways of perceiving constitutionalism indicate specific theories of democracy and value different forms of knowledge as relevant. In general, constitutional law proposes a legal understanding of constitutions, in which there is a strong separation between law and politics, and law and society more in general. One upshot of such a view is a skeptical attitude towards capacities of public reasoning of citizens and the understanding of constitutional knowledge as expert knowledge. In contrast, a deliberative democratic view tends to presuppose critical capacities of ordinary citizens in terms of engaging with constitutional issues. In terms of **procedures**, citizen involvement in deliberative constitutional reform is perceived with different degrees of intensity (consultative, decisive), inclusion (exclusively citizen-based, pluralistic), and temporality (*ex ante*, parallel, *ex post*). Regarding **representation and legitimation**, diverging views are put forward regarding the representative nature of those involved in deliberative fora (with regard to society as a whole) as well as the forms and significance of the legitimacy thrust of deliberation (knowledge input, results of deliberation, sociological legitimacy).

The WG intends to discuss and study the theoretical, normative, and conceptual complexities involved in deliberative constitutional reform and in constitutional reform institutionalizing deliberation as democratic practice. The multi-partner discussion will be deeply related to and informed by actual experiences of constitutional reform involving deliberative practices. A specific attention will be paid to lesser known cases (e.g. Italy, Romania). The aim is to include early career scholars who study these processes in-depth. In this perspective, the **main milestones** are:

- Creating a theoretical-normative grid of different theories, concepts, approaches, and designs of deliberative constitutionalism (year 1);
- Developing a pluralistic and inclusive deliberative conceptual framework for constitutional reform and fleshing out a set of ideal-types of distinctive deliberative constitutional reform processes (year 2);
- Finalizing the framework and producing a significant publication (year 3).

WG Minority groups and constitutional deliberative democracy

The essence of constitutional deliberative democracy is to account for the opinions of all community members in the process rewriting the basic rules of that community. Particular efforts are required to facilitate the inclusion of marginalized groups in the process of deliberation. **All minorities should have an opportunity to bring their particular interests and preferences onto the political agenda and to influence the form of the basic rules.** The normative consensus regarding the necessity for such an inclusive approach originates in the idea of equality among the members of the community, fairness of decisions reached and legitimacy of constitutional reform. Since deliberation is built on consensus and avoids self-interested arguments the outcome will often be different from the aggregation of individual preferences. *This is also why the Action itself goes for full inclusion (gender mainstreaming inside the network, attention to geographic locations and education levels, disabilities).*

In spite of the established importance of deliberative inclusion in theoretical terms, a series of issues arises with the **methodological approach**. First, it is unclear the mechanism through which a deliberative model including minorities can be implemented. Possibilities include representatives from all groups in society (several mini-publics), local level deliberative bodies that can ensure the involvement of as many citizens as possible, or coordinated actions through civil society. Second, what form the constitutional deliberation can take to ensure the effective presence of minorities (e.g. are they ad-hoc, independent, or attached to the executive or the legislative branch)? Third, what are the appropriate deliberative settings to accommodate the identity of minorities (including here the language in which deliberation are organized) and avoid rights of veto for these minorities (like in consociational democracy)? It is relevant to know the procedures involved to ensure a consensus regarding the issues of interest for minorities. While this is often discussed for offline deliberation, the online environment will also be taken into account through the following WG.

A similar number of dilemmas occur in **empirical terms**. The first is related to the type of legitimacy pursued by constitutional deliberative bodies that include minorities. In this sense, a comparison between the ex-ante design and ex-post procedures and outcomes will be useful to understand the dynamic of constitutional deliberation. This perspective on legitimacy complements the view provided by the previous WG and seeks to provide a broader understanding that allows for comparisons between legitimacy for the majority and minority groups. Second, it is important to know the extent to which an inclusive deliberative engagement of citizens in constitutional reforms is related to a lower level of conflict between minorities and majority. Deliberative processes rely on dialogue and reason, while the absence of dialogue and high levels of emotionality often generate conflicts between groups. Under these circumstances, it is likely to have a negative relationship between the inclusion of minorities in deliberation and conflict in society. In this light, the main milestones are:

- Thorough methodological assessment (year 1);
- Empirical investigation of the deliberative processes (year 2);
- Applying these insights into new deliberative processes on the ground (year 3).

WG e-Constitutional deliberative democracy

At the heart of the existing cases of constitutional deliberative reforms is a representative sample of citizens (called a mini-public) which is invited to have several enlightened discussions on constitutional reforms and to elaborate proposals on which political representatives and, sometimes, public at large are asked to vote. New technologies are generally used to reinforce the legitimacy of the process by linking the mini-public with the maxi-public (that is the entire population) at the different stages of the deliberative consultations. At the level of the input, they can be used to inform the general public about the ongoing process, to give public the opportunity to express their opinions on the reforms to be discussed (agenda setting) and to discuss and elaborate proposals on concrete reforms. At the level of the discussion process of the mini-public, they can be used to select the issues, to inform and interact in real time with the general public, and to reach a majority decision on the reforms. Finally at the level of the output, communications technologies can be used to inform in a didactic and engaging manner about the constitutional reforms on which the political representative, and possibly the entire population will have to vote. The objective of this WG is to map and analyse the possible usages of the communications technologies for promoting a more inclusive, deliberative, and legitimate participative constitutional process. This WG will also analyse the possibilities of new types of actors and processes that would not have been possible without the electronic tools (for example, mini publics that may include several thousand members in widely dispersed locations). Main milestones:

- reviewing relevant initiatives, mapping different usages of the communication technologies in constitutional processes, allocation of tasks (year 1);
- new empirical research and innovative approaches to e-deliberative democracy (year 2);
- developing new e-tools as a result of the insights of the first two years (year 3).

Joint deliverables

Along dissemination activities, WGs' efforts will lead to the joint deliverables in three formats:

1. Scientific outputs: conference proceedings and publications in internationally reviewed outlets
2. Policy and practical outputs: common papers on designing and assessing real experiments
3. Technology outputs: tools that can favour deliberation and all its interrelated mechanisms.

To ensure the exchange of expertise, emphasis will be put on short-term scientific missions (STSM) for both senior and junior researchers. For the senior researchers, the STSMs are needed to make progress on the collaborative effort (implement decisions, evaluate alternatives, monitor progress, etc.), whereas they will serve as training support for the ESRs (learning about new methods and techniques, tool development, experimental design, for instance). This Action will constitute a unique environment for researchers, where especially ESRs will find the opportunity to collaborate and develop their expertise, thus improving the European research potential. In addition, Training Schools will give ESRs opportunities to interact with scholars within and outside of the network, both as trainers and trainees.

3.1.2. GANTT DIAGRAM

Activities are regular and well distributed, in order to ensure better management of the overall Action. MC meetings will as far as possible be organised in common with SG meetings and will take place before or after Plenary Action Conferences or joint WG meetings. Whenever needed, the SG can meet virtually (video-conferencing). Annual Monitoring Progress Reports and a Final Report will be issued, in line with the guidelines of the MC, thus providing appraisal of activities performed in the prior quarters. The Final Conference (year 4), which will follow a last Training School, will disseminate the end results of the Action across all WGs and to other stakeholders.

<i>Persons in charge</i>	<i>Milestones</i>	<i>Year 1</i>		<i>Year 2</i>		<i>Year 3</i>		<i>Year 4</i>						
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	
Transversal actions	Management Committee (MC)	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
	Steering Group (ST) (face-to-face and video-conferencing)	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
	Plenary Action Conference	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
	Training Schools	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
	Deliberative portal & handbook/toolkit	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
WG Constitution-making and deliberative Democracy	Creating a theoretical-normative grid of different theories, approaches, and designs of deliberative constitutionalism	█	█	█	█									
	Developing a pluralistic and inclusive deliberative conceptual framework for constitutional reform					█	█	█	█					
	Finalizing the framework and producing a significant publication									█	█	█	█	
	Joint work with other WGs													█
	Joint deliverables					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
WG Minority groups and constitutional deliberative democracy	Thorough methodological assessment	█	█	█	█									
	Empirical investigation of the deliberative processes					█	█	█	█					
	Applying these insights into new deliberative processes on the ground									█	█	█	█	
	Joint work with other WGs													█
	Joint deliverables					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
WG e-Constitutional deliberative democracy	Reviewing relevant initiatives, mapping different usages of the communication technologies in constitutional processes, allocation of tasks	█	█	█	█									
	New empirical research and innovative approaches to e-deliberative democracy					█	█	█	█					
	Developing new e-tools as a result of the insights of the first two years									█	█	█	█	
	Joint work with other WGs													█
	Joint deliverables					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█

3.1.3. PERT CHART (OPTIONAL)

3.1.4. RISK AND CONTINGENCY PLANS

The Work Plan and the structure of the Action have been carefully designed to achieve the Action's objectives. Of course, it is not absolutely protected to contingencies threatening its correct implementation. Those contingencies (and the plans to deal with them) are:

1) Problems with multi-actors/stakeholders' involvement. This risk is embedded in one of the challenges this Action intends to deal with, namely, the absence of cross-fertilization between actors involved in deliberative constitution-making. In order to minimize this risk:

a) *Awareness.* The first measure is to make sure the existence of the Action reaches all potential stakeholders. The deliberative portal will have to be highly publicized. This will be done with the growing circles technique: that is from a small circle of actors, each actor of the circle will reach to its own circle and the awareness of this Action can grow fast and far from the initial inner circle.

b) *Openness*. Another reason that might frighten some potential participants is the fear that this network is made of normative activists who are one-sided in favour of deliberative democracy and rejecting any other democratic forms and especially representative democracy. Such a stance would definitely deter any elected officials and even public servants. As it can – hopefully – be seen from this proposal is that the network urges deliberative democracy as a means not as a goal in itself. In fact, the objective is to bring together actors with many different and therefore opposed points of views. Openness is a core value to this Action.

c) *Added value*. The potential problem with stakeholder involvement is often not that they do not have opportunities to network, it is sometimes that they receive too many. This Action seeks to bring added-value to its members. Two main ways are foreseen: (1) often networks bring together like-minded people, it is exactly the contrary that this Actions aims to do; (2) the wide scope of the network of proponents and their actual experience constitute another main asset to identify suitable participants among stakeholders and to get them interested in collaborating in the Action.

d) *Sustainability of interaction*. It is common for networking projects to begin with a great deal of interaction and enthusiasm, but to lose momentum over time. This Action will need to devote considerable attention and resources to not only starting inter-actor dialogue and collaboration, but sustaining it over time as individual actors join and leave the network. Practically, as any participant to network will have a limited time to spare on collaboration, we will foster collaboration around real applications of constitution-making. In other words, the plan is that not all members of the network participate to all activities but that they can meet and cooperate on some cases, while others collaborate on other ones. Meetings of the networks will then create synergies.

2) Changes in the composition of the Network of Proponents. Though proponents are highly committed to the Action, unexpected withdrawals may occur, altering the composition of some of the bodies and their regular working. Several measures reduce the impact of these withdrawals:

a) *Internal replacement*. This is the basic *post-hoc* measure following any withdrawal. The wide and rich composition of the network would secure a quick replacement of those former participants in key positions, reducing the impact of their withdrawal on the Action's working.

b) *Network expansion*. The incorporation of new potential participants during the first year has been stated as a key objective of the Action. This expansion will also make the network less vulnerable to withdrawals, facilitating internal replacement. In this respect, network expansion will be considered a key strategic goal in those countries with just one representative in the network.

c) *Deliberative governance*. In its essence, this Action will be deliberative; all decisions should be discussed among the participants and offer a fair treatment to all participants, recognizing their contribution to the overall effort and above all ensuring strong commitment to the network.

3.2. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES

Governance of the Action: The Action will be launched by an initial **Management Committee (MC)** Meeting composed of max 2 representatives by member country. At this meeting the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Action will be elected, after a real time for deliberation, along with 2 co- Leaders for each of the 3 **Working Groups (WG)**; this meeting will establish internal policies:

- Policies on equality of gender representation and inclusion of early stage researchers;
- Processes to identify participants in each of the Working Groups;
- Control mechanisms for the Action to ensure targets are met;
- Processes for determining the details of the STSMs and Training School programmes.

The MC will meet up to twice a year and it will coordinate the Action in accordance with COST Guidelines. In addition to normal prerogatives, it will produce a roadmap defining the **Steering Group (SG)** role and mission. The SG will comprise the Chair and Vice-Chair, WG co-Leaders, STSM-Manager, Training-School-Manager, and Communication Manager. This body will meet on a virtual basis as often as needed and physically before and after each Plenary Action Conference. The SG will oversee the implementation of decisions made by the MC and communication between and amongst participants in the Action and submit regular reports.

Action Coordination of Research: 3 mechanisms are utilised in order to coordinate the research undertaken under its auspices: The MC and its Chair will be in charge of the overall management. The SG will give support to the Action management in order to optimise follow-up and coordination. The WGs will coordinate the research in the different areas of the Action. More specifically:

- **Working Groups:** WGs will allow for planning and discussion of research. Researchers from different countries will derive practical benefits from sharing experimental results and data, such as the identification of new research topics and the launching of inter-country partnerships. WGs will provide the input for the yearly scientific meetings and STSMs.

- **Yearly scientific meetings** (Workshops and Training Schools): Work produced by WGs will be used in Workshops and will support Training Schools, passing on specialist knowledge and techniques to junior colleagues and colleagues from related disciplines. As far as possible, seminars and meetings will be held in conjunction with international conferences (in the form of panels or pre-conference workshops). International experts will be invited to participate as speakers and reviewers, to assess the standard of the Action's work and anchor it in the scientific community. Events will be staged in different countries.
- **Short Term Scientific Missions:** STSMs will enable researchers (especially early-stage) to undertake advanced training and exchange and strengthen partnerships. STSMs' scientific resources will be pooled during regular meetings.
- **Communication tools:** the Action's Website with the deliberative portal will serve as a central information and dissemination point during the life of the Action and beyond. The website will include a publicly available Action calendar and programme, information relating to the Action's progress and a programme for STSMs and Training Schools. It will act as an intranet to exchange information amongst COST participants and an internet to promote the Action to the wider public. It will hold project publications and findings. In the protected section, there will be a collaboration platform, giving WG members an interactive space to: keep track of Action's progress; publish information; etc. The Communication Manager with a Public Relation Unit (PRU) will update the Website and coordinate content, with input from WGs.

3.3. NETWORK AS A WHOLE

The three WGs will collaborate closely. Each WG will have a Leader and a Co-Leader and will produce an annual report on its activities, which will be co-ordinated and summarised by the MC and made publicly available on the Action portal. Their scientific advances will be utilised in the Training Schools and for the STSMs. The structures of the WG will be fully flexible, in order to enable other entities to join the Action, with coordination by the SG. In its general functioning the network will pursue four objectives:

- **Gender balance:** This COST Action will respect an appropriate gender balance in all its activities and the MC will place this as a standard item on all its MC agendas. Gender balance will be respected by proposing policies that guarantee that at least 40% of the SG (Chair, Vice-Chair, WG (co)Leaders, STSM manager, Communication Manager, Training-School-Manager) will be of either gender; that at least 40% of STSMs will be allocated to either gender. The implementation of these policies will be monitored by the MC throughout this Action.
- **Involvement of early-stage researchers (ESR) and actors:** policies for gender balance and for the involvement of ESRs will be put in place in the very first MC meeting. They will set a number of targets, such as a minimum of 20% of the annual budget for STSMs, implication of ESRs in the Training Schools both as trainer and trainee, giving priority for meeting reimbursement to ESRs, having ESRs as (co)Leaders of WGs. Capacity building of the ESR is an integral part of this Action. The Action will specifically address the issue of developing ESRs through the mechanisms of Training Schools, through their involvement in STSMs and through this involvement, their contribution to Working Groups. This will enable them to not only enhance their specific research skills and profile but also enable them to develop strong networks.
- **Diversity in terms of countries:** The participants of this COST Action will reflect a wide European dimension, including actors from all parts of Europe. The MC will also ensure that the (co)Leaders and Co-Leaders of the WGs represent a wide range of European countries. The network of proposers comprises already several members of COST targeted countries.
- **Liaison and interaction with other research programmes:** this Action builds on the existing networks and foster collaborations. Lots of its members are part of several of these networks. There are also many deliberative experiments on issues of national relevance outside Europe (e.g. Australian Citizens' Parliament) and this Action will seek to engage with practitioners and relevant scholarly communities worldwide.