

INFORMATION SHEET – COST ACTION CA1735

“Constitution-making & deliberative democracy”

1. ABOUT THE ACTION

The background of the Action 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. In recent years, Iceland and Ireland have turned to deliberative democracy to reform their constitutions. Estonia, Luxembourg and Romania have also experienced constitutional process 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 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.** With most European countries now having experienced some forms of deliberative democracy, Europe is at the centre of this democratic transformation, taking place in the wake of a larger worldwide so-called deliberative democracy turn, which is giving a deliberative flavour to political decision-making. 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. **Therefore, 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.**

What is 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. This is what *COST-Action Deliberate Constitution Making* is set out to do.

2. AIM

This Action seeks to foster social and political innovation; bringing together actors who usually do not communicate well and much with one another; different actors – who are usually not in contact – to discuss and reflect on this democratic challenge. For that matter, **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 the construction of a comprehensive image of the current state of the experiments ran throughout Europe as well as 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.

3. OBJECTIVES

The key output of this unique and diverse network will be a **handbook/toolkit/on-line portal of constitutional deliberative processes**: that is concise, accessible and that would capture good practice, challenges, how to mitigate them. To do so, the Action relies on the participation of **multiple actors**, belonging to different disciplines, groups and from different geographical areas. 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.

4. MEANS

This Action will work towards these objectives through following activities:

- creating the deliberative portal in order to share data on deliberative constitution-making as well as a wiki-made panorama of existing deliberative constitution-making processes;
- 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;
- Organization of workshops and conferences bringing together actors of the Action as well as international partners;
- 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;
- Participation in international conferences;
- assessing its impact in terms of new knowledge and methods/techniques that it makes possible.
- Publications:
- Creation of a biannual newsletter and institutional profiles of the Action in most relevant social networks.

The first innovation in tackling the challenge of constitution making through deliberative democracy is **to do it in a deliberative way** itself by the inclusion of actors from countries that traditionally have not participated in such networks as well as including all minority groups.

5. TIMEFRAME & TERMS OF CONDITION

This action is funded by the *European Cooperation in Science & Technology COST* for a period of four years, starting 7 May 2018. The COST Action only funds networking costs. Participation is free and participants bring in their expertise and experience on these issues and challenges.

The actual work is done in the working groups, and everyone can decide their own engagement. Anyone can join the Action by getting in touch with the MC of the respectable country. Participants from non-COST countries are also welcome; getting in touch with any member.

6. MANAGEMENT

The Action is governed by a Management Committee (MC) composed of representatives by member countries and a Steering Group (SG). The working groups (WG) have two co-leaders each. Ongoing meetings for the different actors (MC, SG, WG) as well as large-scale conferences are organized by the action throughout the running period.

7. CONTACT DETAILS

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