

Challenges of Integrating Early-Career Researchers- Examples from Bosnia and Herzegovina



Prof. Ljiljana Suručić

Bridging the Gap



Is it a lack of motivation, being overburdened with daily tasks, or simply a case of missing relevant information?

THE COUNTDOWN IS ON: 6 MONTHS TO GO

COST Open Call 2025

Fund your research network



European Cooperation in Science & Technology

MISSION

COST provides networking opportunities for researchers and innovators in order to strengthen Europe's capacity to address scientific, technological and societal challenges

VISION

Europe's most empowering research programme

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Promoting and spreading excellence

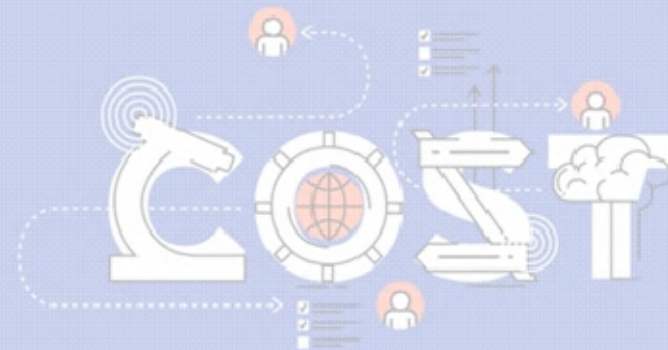
Fostering interdisciplinary research for breakthrough science

Empowering and retaining young researchers

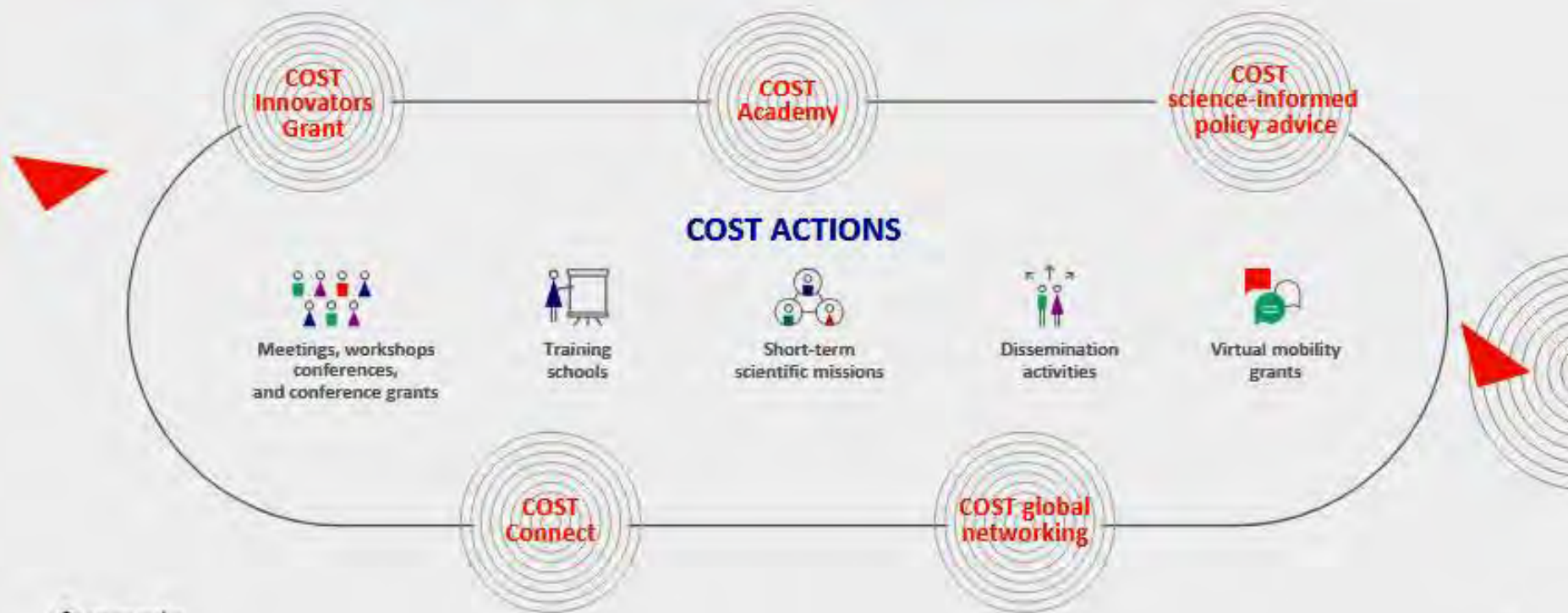
THE COUNTDOWN IS ON: 6 MONTHS TO GO

COST Open Call 2025

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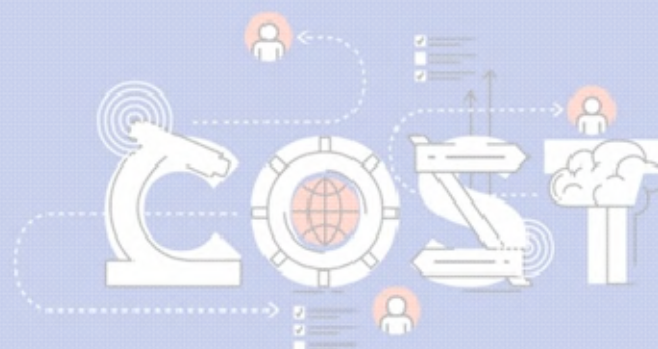
Implementing COST's strategic priorities



THE COUNTDOWN IS ON: 6 MONTHS TO GO

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COST Countries

41 Members

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| ● Albania | ● Germany | ● Norway |
| ● Armenia | ● Greece | ● Poland |
| ● Austria | ● Hungary | ● Portugal |
| ● Belgium | ● Iceland | ● Romania |
| ● Bosnia and Herzegovina | ● Ireland | ● Serbia |
| ● Bulgaria | ● Italy | ● Slovakia |
| ● Croatia | ● Latvia | ● Slovenia |
| ● Cyprus | ● Lithuania | ● Spain |
| ● Czech Republic | ● Luxembourg | ● Sweden |
| ● Denmark | ● Malta | ● Switzerland |
| ● Estonia | ● The Republic of Moldova | ● Turkey |
| ● Finland | ● Montenegro | ● Ukraine |
| ● France | ● The Netherlands | ● United Kingdom |
| ● Georgia | ● The Republic of North Macedonia | |

1 Cooperating Member

- Israel

1 Partner Member

- South Africa



- COST Members non-ITCs (Inclusiveness Target Countries)
- COST Members ITCs
- COST Cooperating Member
- COST Partner Member

THE COUNTDOWN IS ON: 6 MONTHS TO GO

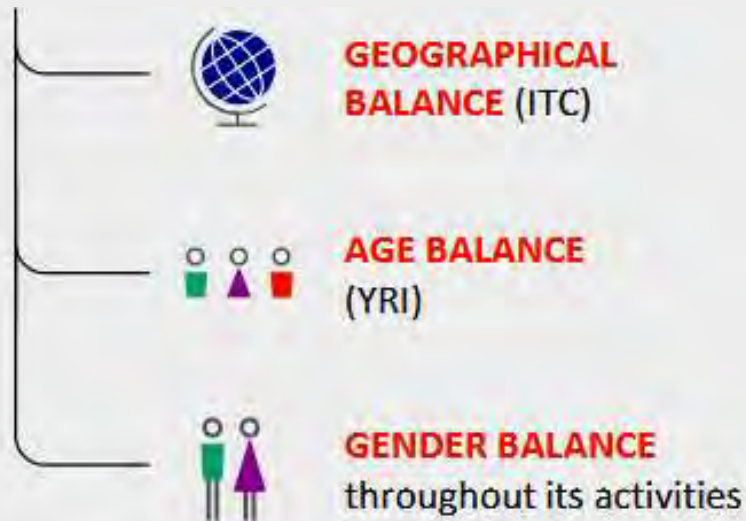
COST Open Call 2025

Fund your research network



COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy

PROMOTING



OBJECTIVES

- 1.** Identifying excellence in science and technology across Europe
- 2.** Increasing research communities' access to funding and infrastructures
- 3.** Triggering structural changes in COST Members' national research systems

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ACCESSIBILITY | BOSANSKI | HRVATSKI | CPICKM | ENGLISH |

Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina Search

Offices ▾ Sectors ▾ Projects Commissions ▾ Important documents Programs ▾ Contacts FAQ

Healthcare Education Citizenship and personal documents Employment, social protection and retirement Science and culture Sports Geodesy, geology and meteorology

Latest news



The Minister of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dubravka Bošnjak, held a meeting with the Chargé d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy, Daniel Koski.

Programs and projects

 **Creative Europe**

 **EU Cost**

 **EU Horizon 2020**

 **EU Eureka**

 **Erasmus +**

 **CEEPUS**

Important

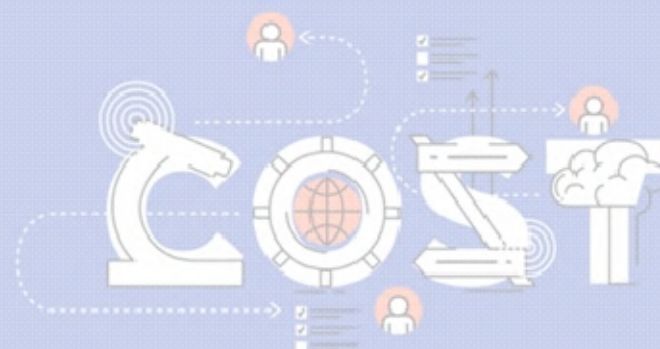
 **the European Union**

The Ministry of Civil Affairs is responsible for international cooperation through COST, and this cooperation is coordinated by a National Coordinator, who manages the process of nominating members to the Management Committees (MC) of COST Actions. Candidates from various institutions can be appointed to the Action's Management Committee (MC).

THE COUNTDOWN IS ON: 6 MONTHS TO GO

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COST Action Nomination Process

Coordinated by the *National COST Coordinator for Bosnia and Herzegovina*

✓ Eligibility & Requirements

Institutional Affiliation: Candidates must be employed by an institution from Bosnia and Herzegovina registered in official registries (scientific organizations, public administration, local government, NGOs, businesses).

Institutional Consent: Application must include written consent from an authorized representative of the institution for the candidate to represent it.

MoU Requirement: Nominations can only be submitted after the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been published on www.cost.eu.

Selection Priority **HIGH** Main and secondary proposers of the Action receive highest priority consideration.

✚ Selection Criteria & Obligations

- 1 **Funded Projects:** Preference given to candidates participating in (inter)national projects with partially or fully secured funding relevant to the Action's topic.
- 2 **Leadership Roles:** Candidates taking on leadership positions (e.g., Working Group leaders) are particularly valued and encouraged.
- 3 **Active Participation:** MC members must participate actively and regularly in committee work, in accordance with COST rules.
- 4 **Simultaneous Limit:** A participant can be an MC member in a maximum of 3 COST Actions simultaneously.

THE COUNTDOWN IS ON: 6 MONTHS TO GO

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AM I ELIGIBLE?

Find out what opportunities are available

Check now

Despite continuous efforts by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH (MCP) to promote COST opportunities, participation from BiH remains low—especially among early-career researchers.



Ministrica Bošnjak i ministar Pejić razgovarali o jačanju zdravstvenog i socijalnog sektora kroz EU programe

[Sve vijesti](#) →

Aktuelnosti iz sektora



Pozitivan trend učešća Bosne i Hercegovine u EU programu za istraživanje Horizon

27.6.2025
Program EU Horizon Europe



„Study in Iraq“: Poziv kandidatima iz BiH za studiranje na univerzitetima u Iraku

26.6.2025
Obrazovanje



Evropska sedmica sporta: Uz podršku Ministarstva civilnih poslova BiH održana Cheerleading večer

23.6.2025
Sport



Baza podataka praktičnih alata i smjernica o opasnim supstancama

20.6.2025
Zdravlje, zaposlovanje, socijalna zaštita i penzije



26. juni - Međunarodni dan borbe protiv zloupotrebe droga i nezakonitog prometa drogama

26.6.2025
Zdravlje



Bosna i Hercegovina na plenarnom sastanku zdravstvene mreže Jugoistočne Evrope u Sofiji

23.6.2025
Zdravlje



MELS – Stipendije Evropskog instituta za javnu administraciju (EIPA) za period od 2025. akademske godine do 2027. akademske godine

20.6.2025
Obrazovanje



Poziv na webinar o COST programu

20.6.2025
Nauka i kultura

Bosnia and Herzegovina's Participation in COST Action COSY (CA21101)

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🕒 Limited Participation

There is currently **limited engagement of active participants**, particularly in the Management Committee.

Active participation is crucial for influencing decisions and shaping the action's development.

⚠️ Critical ECR Gap

A **critical gap exists in early-career researcher (ECR) participation** from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2 participants from BiH

None are ECR (as of June 18, 2025)

This indicates a significant absence of young researchers in the COST action.

📊 Regional Trend

Limited ECR participation from BiH reflects a broader regional pattern among Inclusive Target Countries (ITC).

Consistently low ECR engagement is observed across other COST Actions as well.

A similar pattern of limited early-career researcher participation is evident across most COST Actions involving ITC countries, indicating a systemic need to strengthen capacity-building and support for **young researchers from Bosnia and Herzegovina**.



User Roles who took the survey



37%
Operations
Manager



20%
Marketing
Manager



18%
Customer Support



16%
Data Analyst



9%
Student

Where users are located



Topics that drive engagement



COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

QuestionPro



With support from the Ministry of Civil Affairs, a joint initiative was launched to enhance engagement among young researchers. The approach began with a thorough needs-assessment survey, followed by a tailored webinar addressing the key challenges and questions identified in the survey results.

UČEŠĆE MLADIH ISTRAŽIVAČA U COST AKCIJAMA



Participation of young researchers in COST actions



Anketa je anonimna, a rezultati će
projektima za podršku mladih istra

B *I* U

Procenjeno vreme popunjavanja ankete je kraće od 2 minuta.

**The survey is anonymous and the results will contribute
to projects supporting young researchers.**

B *I* U

The survey filling time is less than 2 minutes.

1. Osnovne informacije

1.1. Životna dob:

Basic information

Age

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding organisation for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and beyond and enable researchers and innovators to grow their ideas in any science and technology field by sharing them with their peers. COST Actions are bottom-up networks with a duration of four years that boost research, innovation and careers.



The survey consisted of 10 questions covering key topics, including participants' age, professional background, previous involvement in COST Actions, and the specific challenges faced by researchers in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

61 одговор

Повежи са Табелама

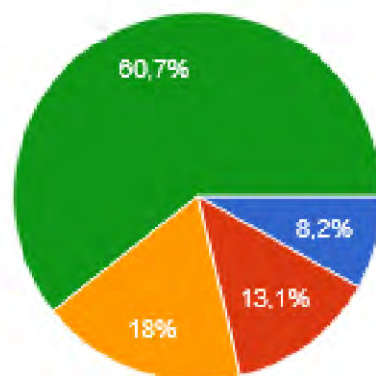
Резиме

Питање

1. Osnovne informacije

1.1. Životna dob:

61 одговор

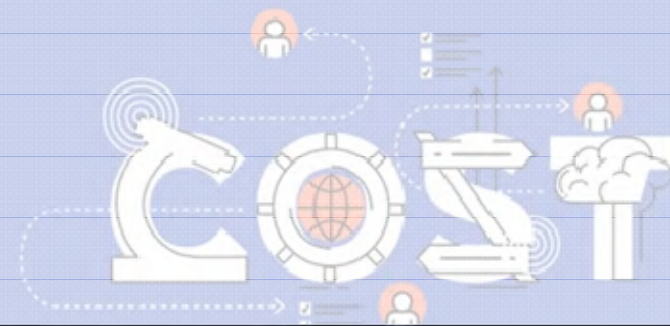
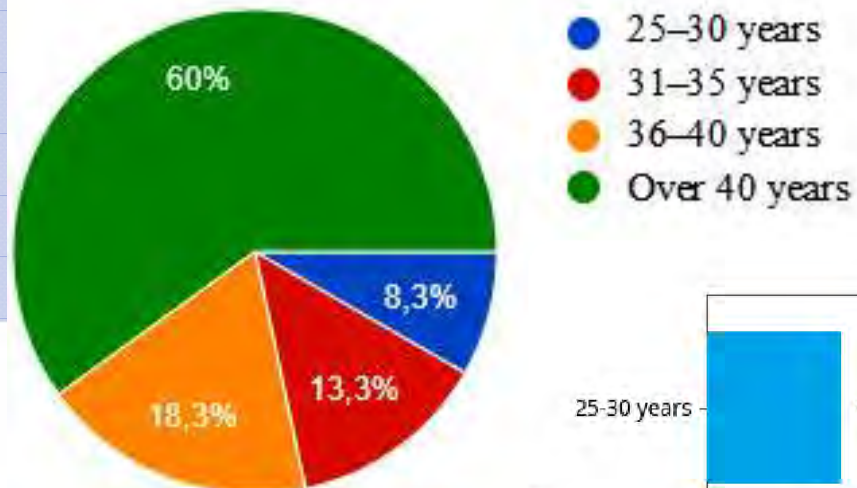


- 25-30 godina
- 31-35 godina
- 36-40 godina
- Preko 40 godina

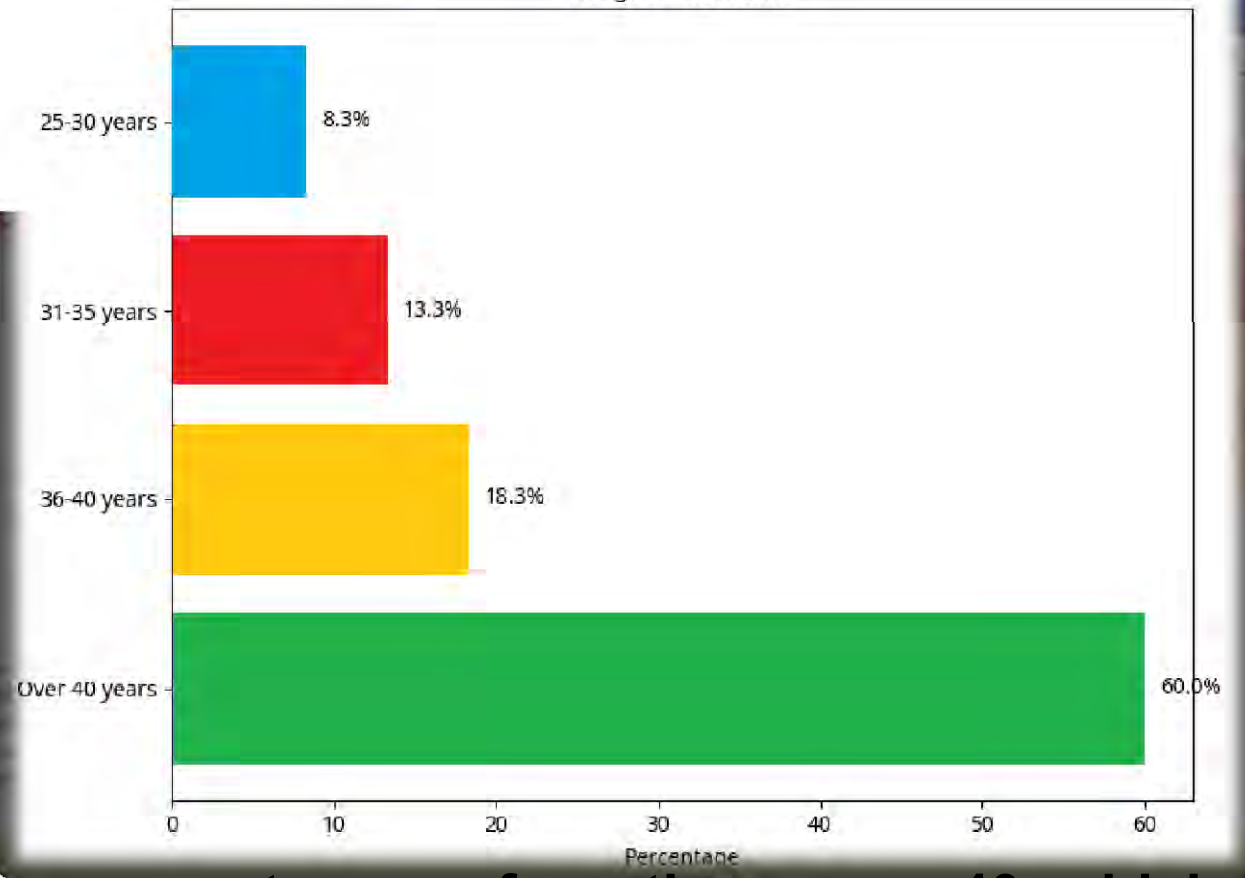


The survey provided valuable insights into the factors influencing participation. It included 60 researchers from BiH universities, primarily from the University of Banja Luka, with notable participation from researchers at the University of Tuzla and Sarajevo.

Age:

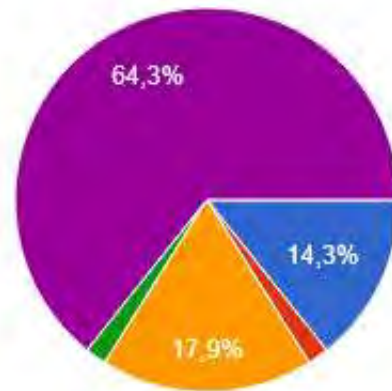


1. Age Distribution



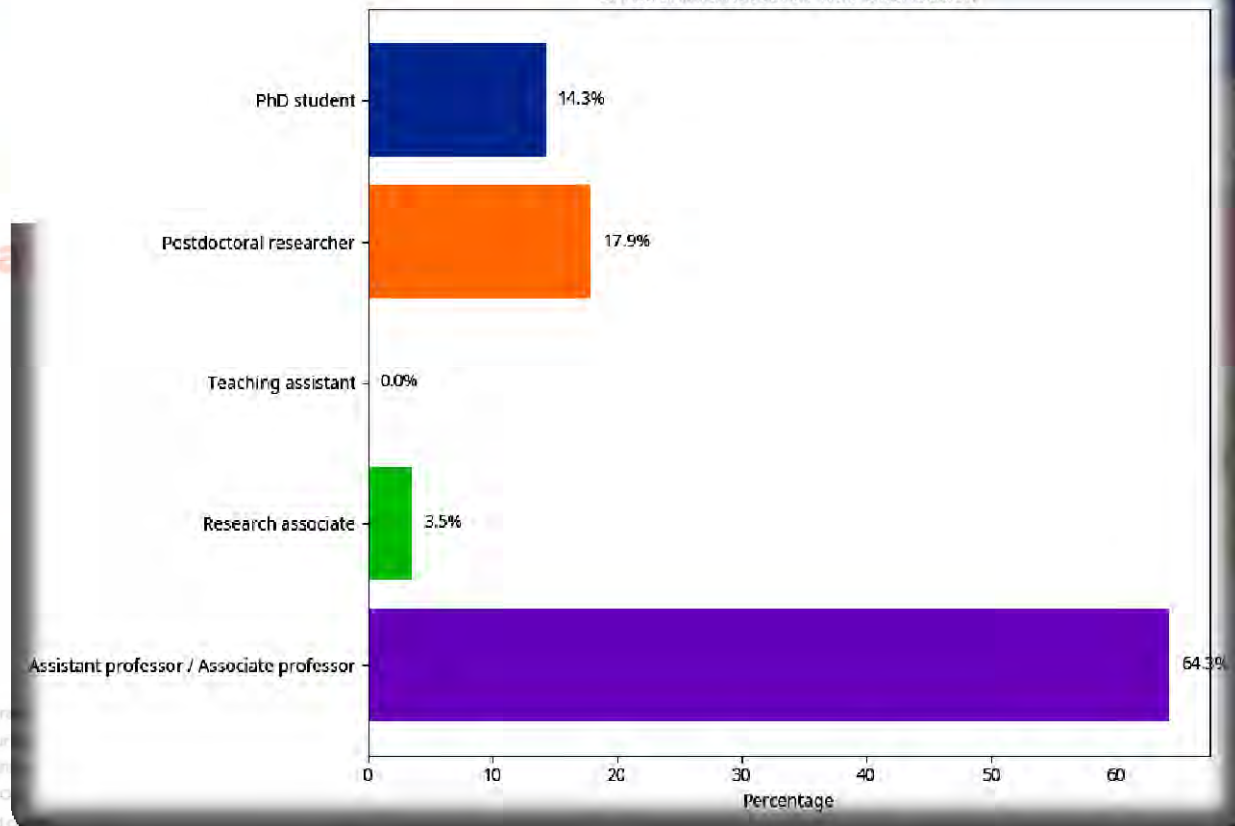
The highest response rate came from those over 40, which correlates with their level of academic advancement.

Academic/Research Title:



- PhD student
- Postdoctoral researcher
- Teaching assistant
- Research associate
- Assistant professor / Associate professor

2. Academic/Research Title Distribution

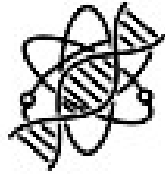


- 64% of the respondents hold a teaching position (associate professor, assistant professor, or full professor)
- 32% were doctoral candidates
- (students, assistants, or teaching collaborators).

Researchers from various scientific fields were included.

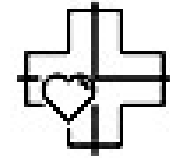
Natural Sciences

Physics
Chemistry
Biology
Geography
Mathematics



Health Sciences

Medicine
Pharmacy & Pharmacology
Clinical Psychology



ACADEMIC FIELDS

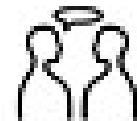
Engineering & Technology

Electrical Engineering &
Computer Science
Process & Materials Engineering
Civil Engineering & Architecture
Mining & Mineral Processing
Forestry & Agricultural Sciences
Food Science & Technology



Social Sciences

Psychology
Sociology
Economics & Business
Law & Public Administration

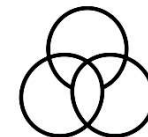


Humanities

Education & Social Work
Languages & Literature

Interdisciplinary Fields

Environmental Protection
Protection and Rescue



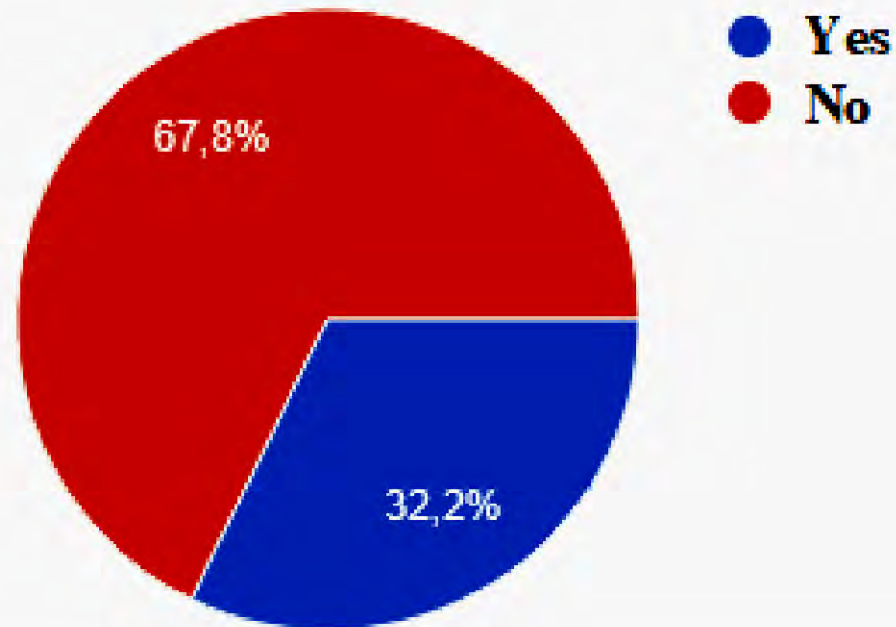
THE COUNTDOWN IS ON: 6 MONTHS TO GO

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Have you ever participated in a COST Action?



The survey showed that 67.8% of respondents had no previous experience with COST Actions, meaning nearly two-thirds of researchers have never participated in these programs.

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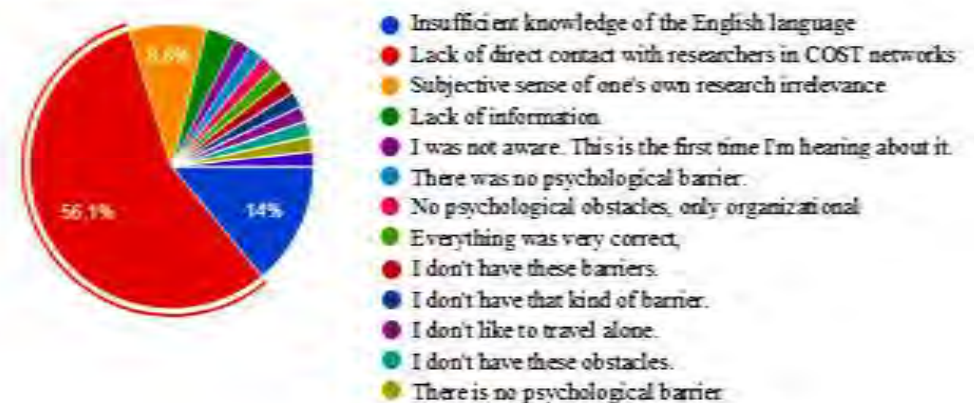


As the main reasons for non-participation, researchers cite financial and organizational challenges.

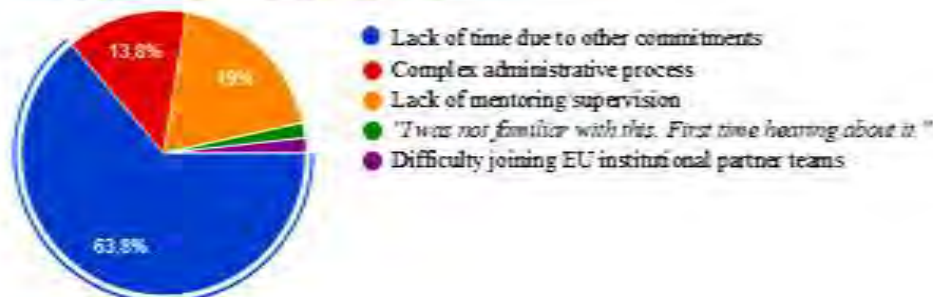
Financial Barriers



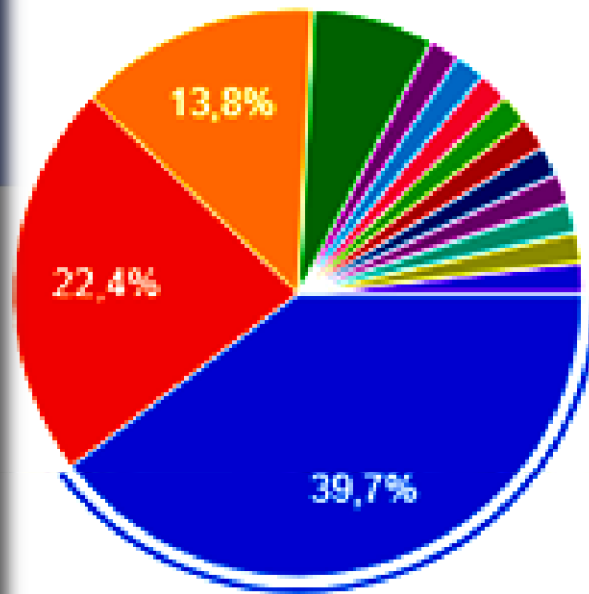
Psychological Barriers



Organizational Barriers



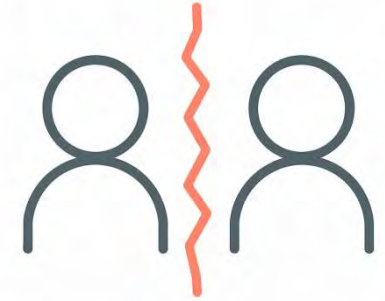
Financial Barriers



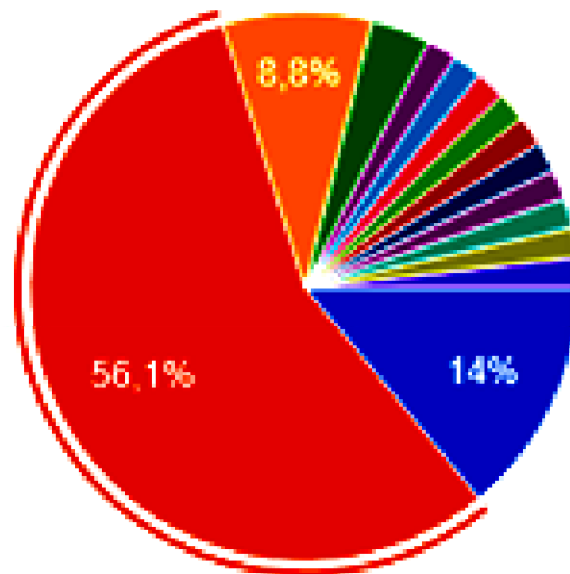
- Lack of financial resources
- Unclear cost reimbursement rules
- Insufficient support from the host institution
- Lack of information
- Complicated reimbursement procedure
- "I wasn't familiar with this. This is the first time I'm hearing about it."
- "Funds received through COST are usually sufficient to cover all expenses..."
- There are no financial obstacles
- "Everything was handled correctly"
- Not applicable
- "Retroactive reimbursement"
- "Upfront payment required, with no possibility of advance payment"



The primary obstacle remains financial: researchers must cover costs upfront while awaiting retroactive reimbursement.



Psychological Barriers



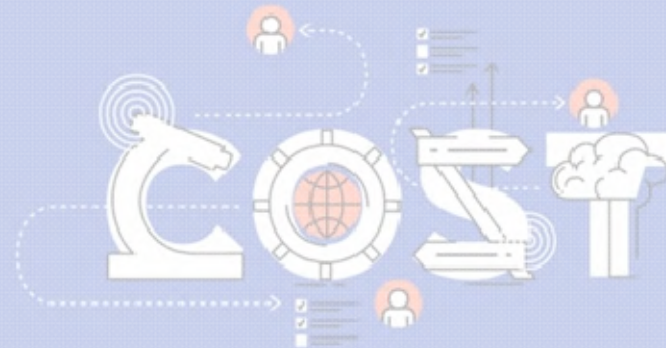
- Insufficient knowledge of the English language
- Lack of direct contact with researchers in COST networks
- Subjective sense of one's own research irrelevance
- Lack of information
- I was not aware. This is the first time I'm hearing about it.
- There was no psychological barrier.
- No psychological obstacles, only organizational
- Everything was very correct,
- I don't have these barriers.
- I don't have that kind of barrier.
- I don't like to travel alone.
- I don't have these obstacles.
- There is no psychological barrier

The primary psychological barrier reported by most respondents (56.1%) is the absence of direct contact with researchers in the COST network.

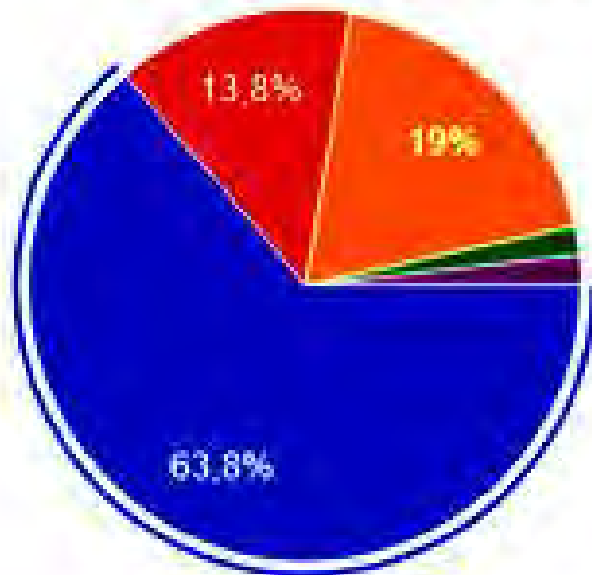
THE COUNTDOWN IS ON: 6 MONTHS TO GO

COST Open Call 2025

Fund your research network.



Organizational Barriers



- Lack of time due to other commitments
- Complex administrative process
- Lack of mentoring/supervision
- "I was not familiar with this. First time hearing about it."
- Difficulty joining EU institutional partner teams



A large number of researchers pointed to time organization problems (63.8%), specifically noting lack of time due to other commitments.

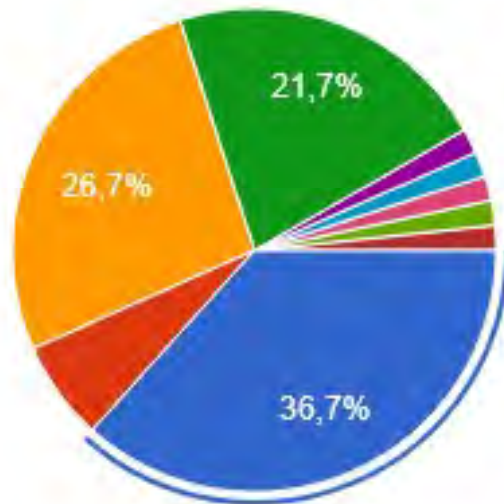
THE COUNTDOWN IS ON: 6 MONTHS TO GO

COST Open Call 2025

Fund your research network

Researchers identified key factors that would enable greater involvement in COST Actions:

What would help you be more active in COST Actions?



- More information through workshops/guides
- Greater mentor/institutional support
- Financial support from institutions
- Better visibility of participation calls
- Specific guidance through mentors/guides
- Self-confidence
- Fewer daily obligations, especially administrative tasks
- Fewer other commitments
- Financial assistance for travel and accommodation

- **More information through workshops/guides (36.7%)**
- **Financial support from institutions (26.7%)**
- **Better visibility of calls for participation (21.7%)**



POZIV NA WEBINAR

COST AKCIJE – FINANSIRANJE I MEĐUNARODNA SARADNJA U NAUCI UČEŠĆE MLADIH ISTRAŽIVAČA U COST AKCIJAMA

Detalji događaja

Datum: 26. jun 2025.

Vreme: 11:00 (CET)

Format: Online pristup

Ciljna grupa

- ✓ Naučno-nastavno osoblje
- ✓ Doktorandi
- ✓ Postdoktorandi

Zainteresovani za međunarodnu naučnu saradnju i dodatna finansijska sredstva



Program webinara [Online pristup događaju pristupni link](#)

✓ Šta su COST akcije i kako funkcionišu?

Predavač: mr sci Alma Hasanović

Nacionalni koordinator za COST akcije u BiH, Ministarstvo civilnih poslova

✓ Finansiranje istraživanja i mobilnosti-grantovi za konferencije, radionice i naučne boravke

Predavač: dr sci Marina Šekutor

Koordinator za dodelu grantova u akciji COST COSY,
Viši naučni saradnik, Institut Ruder Bošković, Zagreb

✓ Iskustva učesnika u COST mrežama- praktični saveti

Predavač: dr sci Ljiljana Suručić

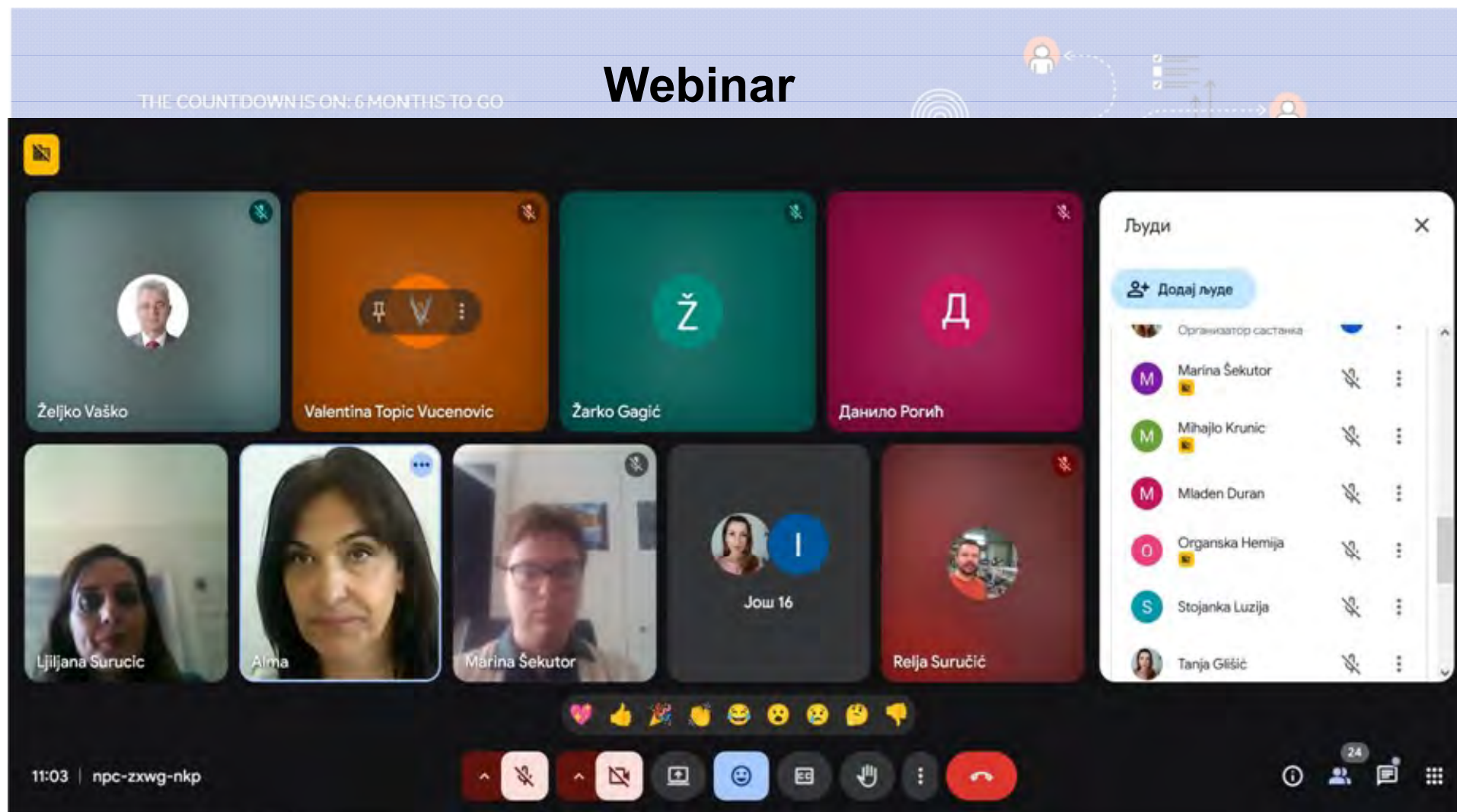
Učesnik COST COSY akcije,
Vanredni profesor, Medicinski fakultet, UNIBL

vreme trajanja 60 min.

[Online pristup događaju pristupni link](#)

To address these challenges, we organized a dedicated webinar with the support of MCP BiH.

The aim was to introduce researchers of all academic ranks, particularly young researchers, to COST Actions.



The webinar was held online on June 26, 2025, and featured the following participants:

Alma Hasanović, National Coordinator for COST Actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
Marina Šekutor, Grant Award Manager for COST Action COSY;
Ljiljana Suručić, participant in COST Action COSY.

Alma (Презентовање)

Budžet COST-a sa Wsima i Hrasogorima

Godina	Budžet (EUR)
2021	40,000
2022	100,000
2023	120,000
2024	140,000

11:08 npc-zxwg-nkp

Pretraži

26.11.2023

Alma Hasanović, presented general basic principles of COST programs and ways to join COST actions, as well as the importance of cooperation with the National Coordinator.

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Tabs sharing devices Help

Примљено (1.553) - reja.s... X Review: Assessment of β-si... X Meet - npc-zxwg-nkp X New Tab X Projects | EU Funding & Tender... X Participant Portal Grant M... X Browse COST Actions - List X

meet.google.com/npc-zxwg-nkp

Getting Started Library Genesis Phytochemistry and P... pyDockEneRes Server http://cadd.zju.edu.cn... Results FASTDRH SmartGraph: A Netw... Software | Network Ph... World Flora BioTransformer 3.0

Marina Šekutor (Презентовање)

European Cooperation in Science & Technology

MISSION
COST provides networking opportunities for researchers and innovators in order to strengthen Europe's capacity to address scientific, technological and societal challenges.

VISION
Europe's most empowering research programme

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
Promoting and spreading excellence
Fostering interdisciplinary research for breakthrough science
Empowering and retaining young researchers

11:24 npc-zxwg-nkp

Pretraži

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Funded by the European Union

Луди

Додај луде

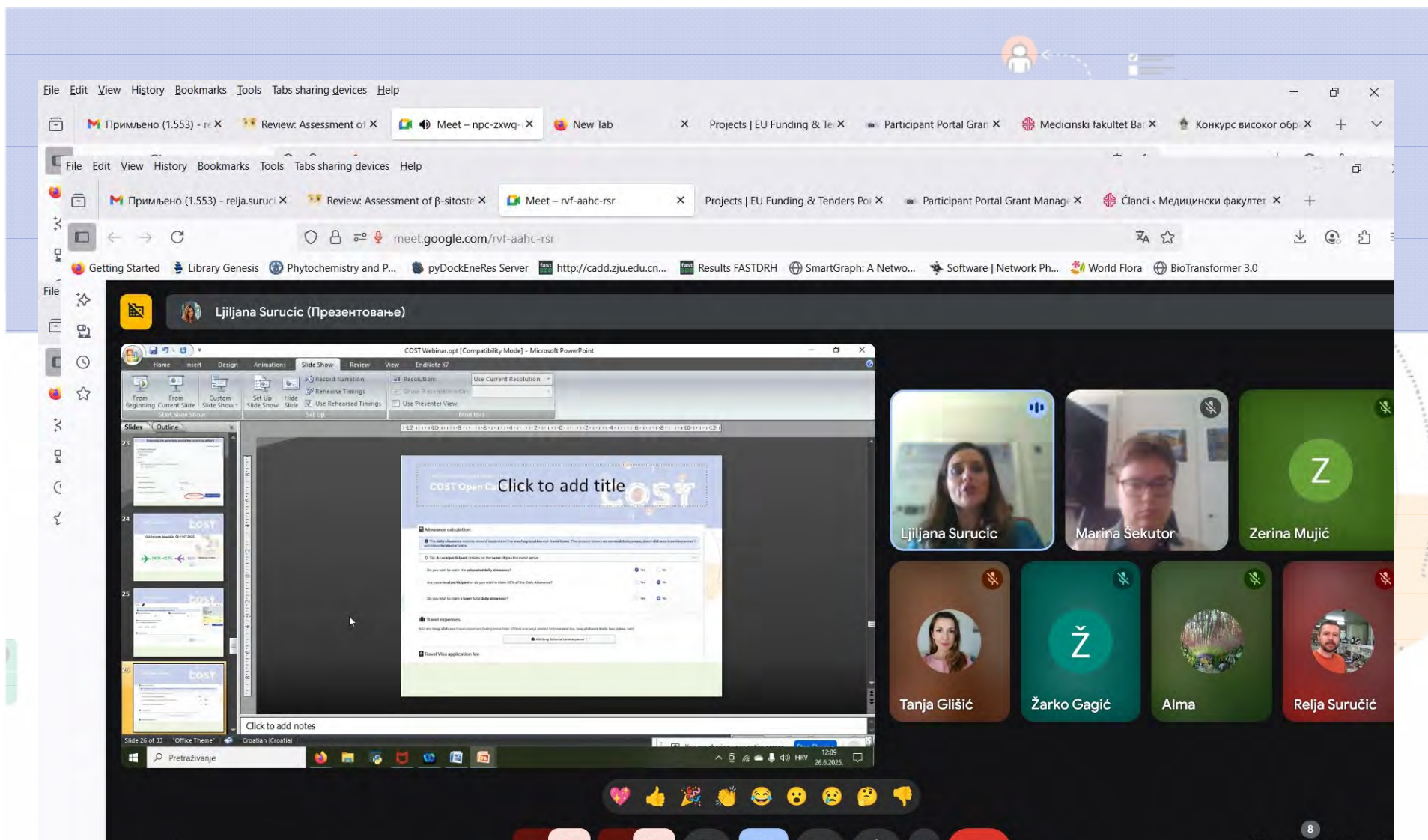
Потражи луде

НА САСТАНКУ

Сарадници 25

Relja Suručić (in)	✕	⋮
Alma	✕	⋮
Andela Bojanić	✕	⋮
Andelka Pačić	✕	⋮

Marina Šekutor spoke about the technical details of grants and opportunities for young researchers to participate.



enable researchers and innovators to grow their ideas in any science and technology field by sharing them with their peers. COST Actions are bottom-up networks with a duration of four years that boost research, innovation and careers.

Personal Experiences of Participation in COST Action COSY.

THE COUNTDOWN IS ON: 6 MONTHS TO GO



COST Actions

Funding

COST Academy

About

Open call
Find your network

SEARCH

e-COST

MENU

CA21101 - CONFINED MOLECULAR SYSTEMS: FROM A NEW GENERATION OF MATERIALS TO THE STARS (COSY)

Downloads

Home > Browse Actions > CONFINED MOLECULAR SYSTEMS: FROM A NEW GENERATION OF MATERIALS TO THE STARS (COSY)

Description

Management Committee

Main Contacts and Leadership

Working Groups and Membership

Description

This COST Action aims to provide a computationally and experimentally sound foundation for the fundamental understanding and control of confined molecular systems. The resulting outcome will be translated into useful knowledge forming the basis for applications. These range from creating a new generation of materials including bio-materials, with immediate transfer to industry, to disclosing the chemistry occurring in space. To this end, the Action will combine new cutting-edge experimental techniques for the synthesis of novel nanomaterials and high-resolution characterization thereof, with state-of-the-art first principles modelling. The most advanced methods for molecular motion as well as modern artificial intelligence, machine learning technologies, and big data science will be applied. COSY will tackle these and other challenges through 5 strongly correlated work packages:

enable researchers and innovators to grow their ideas in any science and technology field by sharing them with their peers. COST Actions are bottom-up networks with a duration of four years that boost research, innovation and careers.

Action Details

MoU - 015/22

CSO Approval date - 27/05/2022

Start date - 27/09/2022

End date - 26/09/2026

<https://www.cost.eu/>



the European Union

Joining the Action Through Working Groups

Key Suggestions for Improving COST Participation



Institutional Support

Enhanced university backing:

Universities should provide stronger financial and administrative support to researchers and professors, including advocacy for their scientific interests.



Structural & Policy Improvements

Workload adjustments:

Introduce a more flexible leave policy, including paid short-term leaves or teaching relief for researchers participating in COST STSMs.

Legal & financial reforms:

Simplify national regulations to enable researchers from ITCs to become grant holders

Streamline reimbursement processes to reduce bureaucratic barriers



Capacity Building & Awareness

Targeted training programs:

Organize multiple seminars covering:

- (1) Introduction to COST Actions,*
- (2) Step-by-step application guidance,*
- (3) Current thematic priorities.*

Hands-on support:

Involve COST representatives in workshops and info days tailored for ITC countries, leveraging existing approved Actions.



Motivational Factors

Recognition & incentives:

Encourage participation by highlighting success stories and providing tangible institutional rewards (e.g., career advancement, funding incentives).

3rd General Meeting – Bologna July 9-11, 2025



**3rd GENERAL MEETING
OF THE "COSY" COST ACTION**
Bologna, Italy



enable researchers and innovators to grow their ideas in any science and technology. They provide a platform for researchers to share their ideas and to collaborate with their peers. COST Actions are bottom-up networks with a duration of 4-6 years, focusing on research, innovation and careers.



COST COSY Trainin School -June 2026.

COST COSY Training School

Building Computational Chemistry Expertise at the University of Banja Luka

DURATION

Two-day intensive event

TARGET AUDIENCE

PhD students & early-career researchers

REGIONAL FOCUS

ITC countries cooperation

Curriculum Topics

Biomolecular Simulations

Computational Materials
Science

Quantum Chemistry
Methods

Multiscale Modeling

Machine Learning
Applications

Learning Format

Standard Lectures

interactive Tutorials

Hands-on Exercises

Computer Simulations

Primary Focus Areas

Molecular Dynamics in confined environments • **Multiscale Modeling** of biological systems • **Computational-Experimental Integration** of data

Regional Cooperation

Foster international collaboration by specifically including young colleagues from neighboring ITC countries, enhancing expertise in computational methods and building a strong network of regional researchers.

Thank you for your attention

COST Open Call 2025

COST ITC Initiative

