



## **DESCRIPTION OF THE COST ACTION**

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### **1. S&T EXCELLENCE**

#### **1.1. Challenge**

##### **1.1.1. Description of the Challenge (Main Aim)**

The COST Action ProSEPS will build a broad network of scholars - in principle political scientists and political sociologists strongly interested in the comparative study of higher educational systems and the internationalization of research in the field of Political Science. However, the Action will be also open to contributors from other scientific communities, who are in some way interested in comparing the evolution of the subject at the core of this initiative, with other domains included in the “universe” of contemporary social sciences.

The Action is intended to serve as a vehicle for the development of an in-depth, innovative assessment of the state of European Political Science, from both a professional and an applied perspective.

From a professional perspective, the Action will focus on developing a common framework for the understanding of the professionalization of Political Science that is to discuss and promote a set of objective measurements regarding the academic centrality and the effectiveness of the work of political scientists, using extensive broad comparative approach.

From the applied perspective, a comparative framework for assessing the social impact of “knowledge” of Political Science will be assessed and tested, in order to understand whether, and in what way, Political Science is employed at national level, and thus to understand the opportunities that political scientists currently seem to have to improve the social impact of their work, and to apply certain implications thereof to the real process of policy making.

The innovative nature of the Action lies in its multidimensional focus: given that the key concepts to be discussed within the Action’s network are those of Professionalization and Social Impact, those scholars constituting this network will have to discuss data and the interpretations of such data. More specifically, the coordination of a wide range of relevant studies will allow the network’s scholars to perfect the knowledge of at least four areas of study: a) the transformation of the academic subject (size of the community, internal articulations, main research areas, PhD programmes, etc.); b) the social and media visibility of the subject and its research outcomes; c) the impact of reforms on the rates of international mobility and international circulation of research outcomes; d) the applicability and application of the products of Political Science, and the social impact of the work of political scientists.



### 1.1.2. Relevance and timeliness

European Political Science is a well-established academic subject. However, its penetration within the university system appears somewhat limited compared to the impact of Political Science in North America. In any event, it seems to be very much dependent on different cultural and academic systems.

Moreover, over the past two decades there has been a radical transformation of the cultural system of many European realities, with the emergence of new academic groups that have very much in common with traditional political scientists, and that share a considerable number of the latter's research targets. The increasing size of two communities like those of the political economists and that of the media studies specialists is probably the clearest sign of the challenges (and the opportunity of cross-fertilization) posed by other European academic guilds to the community of political scientists.

Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of the overall transformation of the work of the political scientists seems to be particularly relevant within the framework of a COST Action. More specifically, over a three-year period the following goals ought to be pursued:

- a) a reflection on the recent evolution (at least the past 25 years) of the academic subject of Political Science, through an extensive country-by-country analysis. Such an objective will be the main topic discussed during the network's first general meeting to be held within six months following stipulation of the contract;
- b) a broad report on two specific aspects of the professionalization of the subject: the notion of mobility within and across national borders (through the adoption of different definitions and measurement approaches), and that of internationalization.
- c) a broad analysis of the social impact of Political Science within policy-making processes at both national and supranational levels. This goal will be pursued through cooperation among all the scholars involved in the Action. Social impact will be assessed by focussing on 3 specific dimensions:
  - 1) the social and media visibility of European political scientists (and thus, their impact on agenda setting);
  - 2) their advisory role (at different stages of the policy process);
  - 3) the perception of Political Science's involvement in the public sphere, also through an analysis of the direct involvement of scholars as holders of political or institutional positions.

The pursuit of this complex overall objective will follow the lengthy preparation and corroboration of the data developed by the aforementioned country experts.

## 1.2. Specific Objectives

### 1.2.1. Research Coordination Objectives

Research Coordination Objective 1: Mapping the existing and recent state (over the past 20 years) of Political Science in Europe, in terms of its professionalization and social impact. The broad coordination of a network of scholars is the only way of achieving this goal. In fact, different languages, the different positions of Political Science in the social and higher education systems in question, different degrees of social demand for such specific knowledge, structurally require conceptual homogenization and reliable operationalization. The State of Political Science will also enable to understand when, where, and under what circumstances, the subject could be considered to have reached a significant degree of professionalization and social impact. Thanks to the COST Action, this goal is feasible and achievable over the course of time.

Research Coordination Objective 2: Coordinating information and data collection through the organization of **four** Working Groups. Two will focus on the indicators of the long-term professionalization of the subject (the expansion of the political scientific community, together with its mobility and internationalization). The other two working groups will deal with the substantive

questions developed in the Action concerning the question of Political Science's social impact: the social and media visibility of European political scientists (and their overall impact on the public debate as well as on agenda setting); their influence in an advisory role; their direct involvement in policy making (as holders of political or institutional positions) and the "dissemination" of their knowledge within the political sphere.

The strong, coordinated collection of existing national data shall result in the establishment of a huge data set (also pertaining to the skills and expertise of individual political scientists) which may also be useful to external stakeholders.

Research Coordination Objective 3: Consolidation of a common broad thematic framework to be applied to different initiatives in some way connected to those research groups constituting the network. This COST Action, in fact, will attempt to consolidate cooperative effort among different areas of expertise, in order to develop shared editorial and disseminative experiences. A very important aspect of this objective will be the analysis of the state of Political Science as a "proxy" of the broader process of mobility, internationalization and social impact of the whole social science macro-sector.

### **1.2.2. Capacity-building Objectives**

Capacity-building Objective 1: A first important capacity-building objective is that of promoting a more cooperative and integrated network of scholars dealing with the professionalization of Political Science. In particular, the COST Action will be promoting new analytic capabilities in those countries that are not traditionally present in the international Political Science networks. There will thus be a specific focus on the different "European areas" (the Mediterranean area, the Central-Eastern area) that are deemed to represent more difficult cases of the institutionalization and internationalization of Political Science.

Capacity-building Objective 2: Given the Action's general objectives discussed above, an important capacity-building objective to be developed by the COST Action will be that of reinforcing the methodological instruments used for the comparative study of the mobility and internationalization of Political Science, as well as that of measuring the social impact that a social science has.

Capacity-building Objective 3: Given the specific objectives of the Action, particularly the future emergence of a pan-European data-infrastructure for monitoring and studying the rate of mobility and internationalization of Political Science and its social impact in Europe, a crucial capacity-building objective of this COST Action will be the development of certain technical tools (dynamic web-based data sources, permanent layouts for the collection of expert surveys, statistical summaries of existing sources of scientific impact, etc.). The COST Action will also help improve the exchange of transparent information regarding the more important permanent data sets to be used for the purposes of the comparative-oriented work of European political scientists.

Capacity-building Objective 4: The COST Action aims at significantly contributing towards the development of the knowledge and skills of those young scholars who wish to become professional political scientists. The Action will in fact support both the organization of training programmes and events designed to facilitate the socialization of junior and senior scholars with other professional groups interested in discussing the applicability and the visibility of the outcomes of Political Science (i.e. journalists, media and social-media-managers, pollsters, think tank managers, leaders of NGOs, etc.).

Capacity-building Objective 5. Finally, probably the most important capacity-building objective is the clarification of the strengths and weakness of Political Science, and thus the formulation of possible strategies designed to make Political Science's findings more relevant in social terms.

### **1.3. Progress beyond the state-of-the-art and Innovation Potential**

### 1.3.1. Description of the state-of-the-art

The problematic social impact of Political Science.

Political Science is a field of academic knowledge which is generally classified as soft and pure from the cognitive point of view, and as rural and divergent from the social point of view. Following Biglan's classification, Political Science can be defined as a soft subject since there is no paradigmatic consensus, while its theoretical bases are highly differentiated, and as a pure subject since there is very little concern about its practical application. According to Becher and Trowler, who focus on the social construction of disciplinary identities, Political Science may be defined as a divergent discipline, since its degree of identity and cohesion remains very low or generic, due to the lack of a common core in modes of discourse/argumentation, and as a rural discipline in the sense that there is a low density of researchers dealing with the same topics, and thus there is less competition.

It is clear that the abovementioned classification tries to embrace a general trend which is under challenge. In fact, over the last couple of decades Political Science has also been subjected to considerable pressure to modify its inherited cultural and cognitive features. As far as regards Political Science's cultural features, the rural dimension has been challenged by the considerable pressure to publish, as a result of internal academic dynamics; however, the divergent dimension has also been affected by the attempt to reduce theoretical variety together with methodological diversity (as shown by the increasing prevalence of quantitatively significant items of research, based on large numbers of cases, published by the most prestigious American journals, and by the increasingly dominant role of rational approaches in the same journals). The cognitive dimension has also been undermined by external actors. For example, the new EU research framework for the period 2014-2020 ("Horizon 2020") clearly calls upon all social sciences, including Political Science, to radically shift towards applied research.

Furthermore, the intrinsic nature of Political Science produces further effects which strongly influence the risk of Political Science succumbing to the vicious circle of social and political irrelevance. As Gerry Stoker has pointed out (2010), there are four possible explanations for the low esteem afforded to Political Science (which is closely linked to the aforementioned hegemonic cultural and cognitive intrinsic dimensions of the subject):

1. the temporal misalignment of the logic of political scientific discovery and its political timing.
2. the organizational incentives of academic work, which in pure subjects in particular are oriented towards peer reputation.
3. the problematic relationship between facts and values, and the prevailing rhetoric of the neutrality of research,
4. the prevailing focus on research questions which are largely disconnected from real political and policy problems.

The picture that emerges from the above discussion are very helpful for any kind of debate on the relevance and social impact of Political Science, since thanks to it, what emerges is how the features of the subject represent a kind of epistemological constraint on any significant external impact, and thus it represents a kind of barrier that must be overcome in order to ensure a sufficiently wide audience in the social sphere and in political debate.

This broad picture, although convincing, is based on anecdotal empirical evidence and rather than on any solid set of data based on a shared conceptualization and way of measuring. In fact, though the intrinsic features of Political Science seem to weaken its social impact, there may be significant national differences as well as different degrees of social impact among the subject's sub-fields.

So, what is really missing is systematic, theory-driven information about Political Science's real impact on society.

Political Science as a Profession.

Political Science, intended in contemporary terms, is a relatively new academic subject that first saw the light of day in Europe's universities during the 1960s, and has achieved significant growth and institutionalization thanks to the massification of higher education in all European countries during the 1960-1980 period. However, the level of academic institutionalization is highly diversified within Europe, as a result of: different national traditions regarding the scientific study of politics (in Continental Europe, Political Science maybe characterized by the traditional "pluralistic" conception of the subject, and have to deal with the historical hegemony of Law as the pivotal discipline in the study of politics); the different timing of the democratization process (Political Science can flourish only in well established democratic systems); the different characteristics of higher education systems and thus of the institutional conditions for the potential development of Political Science.

In this complex context, the development of Political Science has been characterized by national ways with different stories and results.

However, despite a rather uneven development, it can now hold that Political Science is sufficiently institutionalized in most European countries (although in some Eastern European nations the subject remains rather weak), and thus it can be considered as being sufficiently professionalized, in academic terms at least. Evidence of the professionalization and institutionalization of Political Science is also provided by its European dimension: the European Consortium of Political Research, the most established regional association, founded more than 40 years ago, brings together about 400 European departments of Political Science (although very few from Eastern Europe, up until now). In 1994 the Central European Political Science Association (CEPSA) was established as a common forum for Central European political scientists. In 2010 EPSA (European Political Science Association) was established, based on individual membership. In 2013, the European International Studies Association was founded (bringing together all political scientists working in the field of international relations).

Furthermore, the profession of political scientist has become a clearly specialized one: the main subfields (comparative politics, international relations, public policy, European studies, methodology of Political Science, Public administration) have developed in Europe as well as in the U.S.A., and this is clearly demonstrated by the fact that their top-ranking journals are published in Europe.

However, being nationally driven, the institutionalization of Political Science may have certain idiosyncratic features which may be overcome, nevertheless, from the analytical point of view when trying to operate a reliable comparison. Thus, from a theoretical point of view it is reasonable to handle the issue of the professionalization of Political Science by observing not only its institutionalization in the higher education system (in terms of size, tenured posts, students taught), but also its mobility and internationalization. These two dimensions, in fact, are a measure not only of the existence of a supranational scheme for the professionalization of an academic subject, but they also gauge whether, and how, a national community of political scientists is professionalized according to international standards. Mobility operates in two ways: it can be either intra-national or international. Internationalization means whether, and to what degree, political scientists are part of an international network, attend international conferences, and publish the results of their research in international journals. Actually, the limited studies at our disposal reveal certain trends regarding the internationalization of the subject, but the data used are very limited and thus probably not sufficiently reliable. At the same time, there are no real data regarding intra-national mobility (which one would expect to be strictly linked to the features of systemic governance of national higher education systems) or international mobility.

So, the actual mobility and internationalization of Political Science in Europe remains largely unknown.

### 1.3.2. Progress beyond the state-of-the-art

We plan to go beyond the state-of-the-art in regard to 3 main points.

1. As has been pointed out above, the state of the art is characterized by a substantial lack of comparable data about professionalization and social impact. The Action will be thus strongly committed to filling this informational gap and making the existing national data comparable, regarding: the institutionalization of Political Science in Europe; intra-national and international mobility; the internationalization of research production and diffusion; the various different aspects of the subject's social impact.
2. However, the comparison of existing data should be based on a sensitive conceptualization of labels and concepts which have different meanings in different countries, and on a reliable measure of institutional differences (in terms of higher education systems, structure of the policy-making, cultural legacy). So another mark of progress pursued by the COST Action will be to design an empirically-based map of the institutional environments in which Political Science operates. This map could significantly contribute towards an understanding of the conditions under which Political Science may be highly professionalized (in terms of mobility and internationalization) and may have a significant social impact.
3. A detailed map of the differences in the degree of professionalization and social impact, in the case of different sub-fields (public policy and public administration, comparative politics, European Studies, and International Relations).

### **1.3.3. Innovation in tackling the challenge**

The main form of innovation pursued by this COST Action towards tackling the challenge of the uncertain and unbalanced process of mobility/internationalization and social impact of Political Science, is the integration of all the information collected so far, mainly resulting from case studies and intensive "limited" comparisons", in order to move towards a truly pan-European collection of data and studies.

At least two other crucial forms of innovation will have to be achieved:

1. the definition of a new set of indicators of Political Science's impact, internationalization and mobility. This set of indicators will take account of all country-specific dimensions (different university systems, linguistic specificities, etc.) in order to establish similar databases and to extend the discussion to all European realities;
2. the launch of a new ground-breaking model of data infrastructure (to be implemented, improved and updated after completion of this Action) concerning the extension, the specialization, and the rate of internationalization and mobility, of the community of European political scientists.

## **1.4. Added value of networking**

### **1.4.1. In relation to the Challenge**

Networking is an ineluctable pillar of the COST Action. The basic needs of the Action (shared indicators for professionalization and social impact; comparison of different academic traditions and institutional arrangements; collection of reliable and comparable data) make networking the only effective approach to this type of action. Thanks to networking, all possible national diversities (in terms of conceptual meanings and institutional structure) can be taken into consideration and, where possible, led towards the construction of a common basis.

### **1.4.2. In relation to existing efforts at European and/or international level**

There are very few significant initiatives at European or International level focussed on collecting data and finding empirical evidence regarding the professionalization and social impact of Political Science. At the European level, two interesting efforts have been made to describe the state of Political Science in West European countries (Klingemann 2007) and in Central/Eastern European ones (Eisfeld and Pal 2010). They represent two departure points for the COST Action. Over the last decade, the journal *European Political Science* has published many papers concerning the national status of Political Science. The same can be said of *PS/Political Science* which since its

foundation, has paid considerable attention to the development of Political Science in the United States. The International Political Science Association has thought about launching a similar initiative in recent years, but a lack of funding has made this unaffordable.

We are quite confident that this COST Action will be warmly welcomed by all national and European Political Science associations, precisely because it would fill evident clear gap in existing data, knowledge and conceptual standardization.

## 2. IMPACT

### 2.1. Expected Impact

#### 2.1.1. Short-term and long-term scientific, technological, and/or socioeconomic impacts

**SHORT-TERM IMPACT.** From the scientific point of view, the short-term impact will be substantial. Thanks to the results of COST Actions, those scholars interested in the impact of (Political) Science will have masses of empirical material to consult and use for their research. Furthermore, in the short term, the scientific contribution of the COST Action will be to better corroborate and reformulate the main theories about the social role and impact of Political Science. The COST Action's results will also influence the way in which scholars and academics usually operationalize the dimensions of internationalization and mobility.

The socio-economic impact will be to offer the main socio-economic stakeholders a precise picture of the skills that political scientists can offer in their own countries.

**LONG-TERM IMPACT.** From the scientific point of view, the expected long-term impact of the COST Action will be to structurally redefine the way in which the professionalization and social impact of Political Science (and also of the other social sciences) are approached from both the theoretical and empirical points of view. The set of indicators and the theoretical framework will be considered as a main point of reference for those interested in this topic.

From the socio-economic point of view, the results of the COST Action will influence the behaviour of various different actors: national communities of political scientists, since they will have a clear indication of the best practices to adopt, depending on their institutional context, so as to better professionalize the subject and raise its social impact; young students aspiring to become political scientists, who may be guided in their choice of research topic and/or subject sub-field; public institutions, which could change the skills required for their senior management posts.

### 2.2. Measures to Maximise Impact

#### 2.2.1. Plan for involving the most relevant stakeholders

The most important stake-holders are: professional associations (national and regional); governments; the mass-media.

The Action aims at involving national and regional professional associations from the very start. In fact, it is thanks to such associations that the first rough data can be collected (no. of political scientists; Phd programmes in Political Science, academic status of the subject area, etc.). Then, during the different phases of the actions, the professional associations will be asked to comment on the different reports and interim results deriving from the action.

Governments will be involved (either as Ministries or as local public administrations) during the third year of the Action (through the organization of two or three "local" workshops"), when the first significant data on the professional skills of political scientists have been collected. The main aim of this involvement is twofold: on the one hand it is designed to inform governments of the skills that political scientists can offer in their own countries; on the other hand, it will serve to gather data about which kinds of skill are required by governments but are not sufficiently present within the national (supranational, since also the EU Commission will be involved) community of political scientists.

The principal mass-media will be involved, (through the organization of two or three “local” workshops”), when all the data on the public visibility of Political Science will be collected and analyzed, as during the third year of the Action. The main aim is not only to inform the media about the real expertise and skills (for public debate) of political scientists, but also to understand how Political Science can achieve greater public visibility.

### **2.2.2. Dissemination and/or Exploitation Plan**

The dissemination plan will be characterized by being addressed to two different targets, namely the scientific community and external stakeholders.

Regarding dissemination to the scientific community, the Action’s plan is as follows:

- Starting in the second year, the partial results of the Action’s activities will be presented at the conferences held by the main international associations (IPSA, ECPR, EPSA) as well as at the conferences of national professional associations. This will achieve not only an initial dissemination, but is also expected to generate significant feedback regarding the initial results and the methodological issues dealt with by the COST Action
- The final results of the activities will be presented in articles to be submitted to national and international journals, and in at least two published books.
- The final results will be submitted for discussion to the European associations of other social sciences (above all sociology and economics), with the aim of broadening the scope and impact of the COST Action in the future.
- The final data set will be made available to the public, and national associations will be invited to help maintain and upgrade this data set.

As regards its external dissemination, the Action is aimed at implementing the following:

- To officially present the results of the COST Action at EU level
- To officially present the results of the COST Action at national governmental level

## **2.3. Potential for Innovation versus Risk Level**

### **2.3.1. Potential for scientific, technological and/or socioeconomic innovation breakthroughs**

This COST Action will address two forms of innovation, one scientific and the other socio-economic.

From the scientific point of view, for the first time this COST Action will make it possible to achieve a shared methodological approach to the measurement and analysis of the professionalization and social impact of Political Science. This could open the door to a broader effort to do likewise for all the social sciences (and why not, perhaps also the humanities). This result could be extremely useful in terms of the EU’s efforts to establish a more practical role for the social sciences.

From the socio-economic point of view, the innovation that the COST action will achieve is precisely that of providing a detailed map of the applied skills that Political Science, and its various sub-branches can offer, both at national and EU levels, to policy makers. So from this point of view, it will offer a kind of skills bank which policy makers can draw upon in order to find the skills and advice they need depending on their contingent needs.

## **3. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **3.1. Description of the Work Plan**

#### **3.1.1. Description of Working Groups**

### WG 1: Institutional and Individual Developments and the State of the Discipline

The main objective of this WG is to provide a precise diachronic description of the development of Political Science between the end of the XX century and the present day. Indicators of academic penetration, dimensions of internal organization, as well as qualitative accounts of the role of the subject within teaching organizations (from BA to PhD programmes) will be discussed and defined according to a standard format. After the phase of data gathering, a common pool of data about the presence of Political Science in Europe will be implemented. A first milestone is month 8, when a first grid of variables for the definition of a directory of European political scientists will be defined. The work on such a grid will result in a first deliverable (month 21) concerning the size of the subject (a list of political scientists with their corresponding affiliations, basic sociologic features, areas of interests). By month 30, another deliverable will be set: a dataset regarding the presence of Political Science in the teaching organizations of the entire set of countries included in the data-set. A final report with the descriptive state of the art of European Political Science (month 36) will complete this group's workload. The last year of the Action will be devoted to the dissemination

### WG 2: Internationalization of Political Science: supranational mobility and transnational research.

The twofold objective of this WG is to analyse the expansion and benefits of mobility in European Political Science and to assess the capability of European scholars to divulge and publicise their work at the international level. Different definitions of mobility will be discussed at first (by month 10): the internal mobility of academic careers, cross-country mobility via Training and Mobility Grants, Lifelong Learning Programme facilities, etc., cross-country mobility of academic careers. In the mean time, a phase of preparation of the tools to be employed during the empirical research will take place. The milestone of a first deliverable – a code book of the most relevant information to be collected about the international circulation of the research of European political scientists, will be positioned at month 16

After that the methodological phase will be terminated, the operative phase will start. Quantitative data regarding the circulation of political scientists will be compiled and a common pool of data will be available by month 32. The dataset concerning the main trans-national project of European Political scientists will be completed by month 34. A final report on internationalization of European Political Science, including specific country-based tables and comparative observations both on the matter of teaching/learning political science and the matter of transnational research cooperation will have to be completed before the end of the third year of the action Action (month 36). The last year of the Action will be devoted to the dissemination

### WG 3: Social impact, media visibility and participation of Political Science in the public sphere

This WG will have the main task of producing information about the development of the “social roles” of the work of a Political Scientist. This goal will be pursuable thanks to an on-line survey based on a very simple questionnaire developed so as to reach all professional European political scientists as defined by the experts involved in WG 1. While the directory of European political scientists is under construction, the WG will be busy with the drafting of the questionnaire. This deliverable will have to be ready by month 12. The on-line survey will be launched by month 16, and it will remain open until month 34. This will allow the WG participants to send more than one “reminder” to their respective domestic groups of prospective respondents.

Qualitative and intensive data regarding the “widespread perception” of the role of social sciences, together with other sources – mass surveys and the secondary analysis of the literature – collected at the domestic level, will help the experts involved in the WP to reconstruct the relationship between the community of political scientists and the “public sphere”, with a specific focus being placed on the theme of institutional and administrative reform. The work will also include an analysis of the direct involvement of scholars as holders of political or institutional office, that is to say, a comparative study of the link between an academic career in the field of Political Science and the circulation of the political elite at national and supranational levels. Month 34 will be the deadline for the assessment based on all the countries covered by the specific qualitative work of this WG.

By month 36, a comparative report on the social and media visibility of European political scientists, as well as the public perception of the participation of this professional figure in the public debate will have to be completed. The last year of the Action will be devoted to the dissemination

WG 4: The advisory role of political scientists in Europe. This WG will operate in parallel with WG 3. The experts involved in the WG will take about 12 months to discuss a short questionnaire, which will be integrated into the aforementioned on-line survey. Questions will concern the role of scholars in advising public administrations and political authorities at all levels (local, regional, national, supranational) during the different stages of the policy process. Questions about the normative beliefs of respondents concerning the ideal “roles” of political scientists, and ethical and deontological matters, will also be included.

Moreover, the Action members involved in this WG will have to produce qualitative reports on the advisory role of political scientists in some selected European realities. In order to complete this work, they will produce specific questions during the long time of «opening» of the web-survey, proposing flash surveys and asking comments to be posted on the Action web-page, concerning the role of political scientists in the major reforms and debated going on in Europe (institutional and constitutional reforms, administrative reforms, Higher Education system reform, European Union debate, etc.)

Month 34 will be the milestone for the completion of the survey, while the final report regarding the advisory role of political scientists in Europe will be delivered by month 36. The last year of the Action will be devoted to the dissemination



networks, etc.) reveal an excessively long list of variables to be covered by a relatively small number of scholars, a second attempt will enable the scope of the set of information to be reduced somewhat. In particular, indicators of the internationalization of research products, and of the presence of Political Science within teaching– (where, for example, the field can be limited to MA and PhD programmes) will be reviewed.

- If the first round of interviews with the entire population of European professional political scientists reveals an excessively low response, the CAWI-based survey conducted by all the country experts at the domestic level will be reduced, with information limited to a smaller cluster of questions. In particular, questions about the circulation of scientific works via international networks, and about involvement in international research funding projects, will be reduced in number. A limited quantity of qualitative interviews with stakeholders and experts (for instance, all the chairs of the Political Science Associations at the domestic level) will replace such missing information.
- In the event of a very poor response from the country experts for a given country, the Action will consider the exclusion of that country from the main deliverables, although the qualitative account of the state of Political Science will remain a possible “minimum” goal in all countries involved.

## 2.4. Management structures and procedures

The management structure of the ProSEPS Action will be very simple, and based on three levels:

1. The Management Committee (that will include also the representatives of the NNC Country Institutions and of COST International Partners involved in the Action, as MC Observers, having no voting rights within the MC), according to the COST Framework’s rules, will be in charge of coordinating, managing and implementing the Actions’ activities. The first MC meeting will set the general guidelines of the Action and the Working groups. The second will revise the results of the first year of activity. The third will be held before the end of the Action to collect the main findings.
2. Each WG will convene at least two times, with a specific substantive agenda.
3. The Core Group will be composed by the Action Chair, the Action Vice-Chair and the leaders and vice-leaders of the four Working Groups, together with the manager of STSMs. It will be appointed during the first meeting of the MC. It will usually be held before each MC. Other meetings could be defined in order to discuss specific findings or problems arisen in the implementation of the Action.
4. A group of non-European experts will also be included in the activities. They will be invited to the MC meeting and, on request, to the meetings of the WGs, when their expertise will be called upon for the purpose of discussing the Action design and initial outcomes of the comparative analysis work.

## 2.5. Network as a whole

The group of scholars involved in the network constitutes a significant panel of experts. All of them are qualified professionals already involved in the discussion on the state of discipline. Nevertheless, they represent different approaches and sub-disciplinary fields (from Public Policy to Public Administration, from Comparative politics to International relations) and also different “generational” points of view. Most of the participants have in their curriculum a significant experience within their national scientific communities (national associations of political and social sciences, membership and executive offices in international associations and editorial boards, expertise in the field of professional recruitment and career service).

The MC will have the goal to distribute this solid bunch of scholars among the WPs, if necessary it will integrate the groups by inviting other participants with specific expertise. The presence, within the network, of a small but qualified number of scholars from Cost International Partner Countries will provide a further help in the definition of a strong team in every WG.



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