

Brussels, 23 June 2017

COST 022/17

DECISION

Subject: **Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the COST Action “Reappraising Intellectual Debates on Civic Rights and Democracy in Europe” (RECAST) CA16211**

The COST Member Countries and/or the COST Cooperating State will find attached the Memorandum of Understanding for the COST Action Reappraising Intellectual Debates on Civic Rights and Democracy in Europe approved by the Committee of Senior Officials through written procedure on 23 June 2017.



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

For the implementation of a COST Action designated as

COST Action CA16211
REAPPRAISING INTELLECTUAL DEBATES ON CIVIC RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE
(RECAST)

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);
- b. "COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval" (COST 133/14);
- c. "COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment" (COST 134/14);
- d. "COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations Participation" (COST 135/14).

The main aim and objective of the Action is to reappraise the contributions of intellectual debates to the challenge of civic rights in European democracies. Scholarly production is mostly available from separate spheres, which to a great extent reproduce structural political and policy divisions. RECAST seeks to revamp the path connecting intellectual debates, public debates, politics, and policy action. 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 2016.

The MoU will enter into force once at least five (5) 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.

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.

OVERVIEW

Summary

Imagining the relations of civic rights and democracy as self-evident and unproblematic disregards their plural argumentative uses, the dissensual features of their conceptual and institutional relationship, their national legal and political traditions both divergent and intertwining, and the many obstacles that hinder their common fulfilments in practice.

Those conditions pose a prior challenge to intellectual debates whose character and value are usually seen as hardly relevant to European politics. The COST Action aims at recasting the interface between intellectual debates, public debates, politics, and policy action with the contributions of more argumentatively- and historically-oriented social science accounts and better institutionally-, politically- and legally-informed humanities research.

Since the early nineties, the responses of European democracies to the growing conflicting claims on civic rights of individuals and groups in secularized societies framing new forms of ethnic, religious, and civil diversity, have been theorized largely in unrelated spheres. By advancing this form of cooperative research, the Action seeks to provide new insights into the links (theoretical, political, and institutional) between civic rights and democracy in Europe. Widening their perspective of analysis and deepening their transnational understanding become a constructive condition to engage scholars as well as social and political agents in RECAST debates, with the aim of better informing political reform.

Drawn on a transnational, cooperative network, such interdisciplinary endeavour will contribute to bridge the gap that separates politics and policy action from humanities and social science research focused on the intricate relations between civic rights and the practices of democracy in Europe.

<p>Areas of Expertise Relevant for the Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Philosophy, Ethics and Religion: Ethics and morality, social ethics ● History and Archeology: History of ideas, intellectual history, history of science and technology ● Political Science: Democratization, social movements ● History and Archeology: Colonial and post-colonial history, global and transnational history 	<p>Keywords</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Civic rights and the practice of democracy ● Claims to civic rights in European democracies ● Humanities and social sciences cooperative research ● Intellectual debates, politics, and policy action ● Entangled European history and democratization
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Specific Objectives

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

Research Coordination

- The COST Action aims at recasting the interface between intellectual debates, public debates, politics, and policy action with the contributions of more argumentatively- and historically-oriented social science accounts and better institutionally-, politically- and legally-informed humanities research.
- By advancing this form of cooperative research, the Action seeks to bridge the gap that separates politics and policy action from humanities and social science research, and then provide new insights into the links

(theoretical, political, and institutional) between civic rights and democracy in Europe.

- Accordingly, RECAST aims at mapping the European debates on civic rights claims and democracy. To that objective, it will study how the languages of democracy and rights draw on civic practices, and how they compare throughout Europe.
- RECAST seeks to shed light on how their conceptual resources are used in historical, moral, legal, ideological, and political arguments about the relations of civic rights and democracy. It will thus examine the argumentative paths linking intellectual debates with political agendas to try out unexplored ways of informing political reforms.

Capacity Building

- Strengthening interdisciplinary cooperation. Significantly, the pursuit of specialization runs opposite to scholarly cooperation, whereas an interdisciplinary network entails a balance between scholarly approaches. It further requires their coordination through communication and debate. Methodological pluralism proves to be a necessary condition in the search for innovative results.
- Expanding its international membership. The collaborative research needed identifies a growing international network of scholars, research groups, and centres, as well as non-academic stakeholders, from sixteen COST Member Countries, a Near Neighbour Country, a Cooperating State, and an International Partner Country. Their different academic traditions make possible the network.
- Developing an integrated, interdisciplinary training programme through a Training School open to Ad Hoc Participants, from journalists to policy-makers. By testing methodological innovations, it provides reliable conditions to improve the passage from theory to politics and policy.
- Focusing the Action as a networking programme of publications-oriented activities with the added aim of contributing to public debates. Joint publications are the Action's distinctive feature of the Dissemination networking tool. As they target both social media and scholarly outlets, dissemination is streamlined by the participation in public debates.

1) S&T EXCELLENCE

A) CHALLENGE

I) DESCRIPTION OF THE CHALLENGE (MAIN AIM)

1. Imagining the relations of civic rights and democracy as self-evident, or even unproblematic, disregards their plural argumentative uses, the dissensual features of their conceptual and institutional relationships, their national legal and political traditions both divergent and intertwining, and the many obstacles that hinder their common fulfilments in practice.

2. Those conditions pose a political challenge to European democracies. They also question the reformist capacity of intellectual debates whose character and value are usually seen as hardly relevant to European politics. The COST Action aims at recasting the interface between intellectual debates, public debates, politics, and policy action with the contributions of more argumentatively- and historically-oriented social science accounts and better institutionally-, politically- and legally-informed humanities research.

3. Ever since the nineties, the reactions to the growing conflicting claims on civic rights of individuals and groups in secularized societies framing new forms of ethnic, religious, and civil diversity, have been theorized largely in unrelated spheres. In social sciences, responses range from empirical-quantitative to legal and social theory studies, whereas in humanities the leading approaches extend from political and social history to cultural studies to moral and political philosophy. Very rarely have responses been produced by humanities' and social sciences' joint approaches.

4. By advancing this form of cooperative research, the Action seeks to bridge the gap that separates politics and policy action from humanities and social science research, and then provide new insights into the links (theoretical, political, and institutional) between civic rights and democracy in Europe. Widening their interpretive outlook and deepening their transnational understanding become constructive conditions to engage scholars as well as journalists and social and political agents in the Action to reappraise intellectual debates on the intricate relations between civic rights and the practices of democracy in Europe.

II) RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS

1. Three decades of democratic changes in Europe since 1989 is a time span ample enough to draw lessons from comparative historical experiences. It has been the time of a far-reaching enlargement process of the European Community into the European Union growing from twelve to twenty-eight member states. Such political reconfiguration of the continent has yet pivoted around another institution, the Council of Europe. Its role in promoting human rights and democracy paves the way for another form of partnership, by 2016 including forty-seven members.

2. From both constellations of countries, crossed histories weave an enlightening perspective to appreciate the rising claims on civic rights in European democracies. Two effects follow:

(a) Their rejoinders explain the inescapable tension between progress and regress in the advancement of civic rights in both established and emerging democracies.

(b) They give rise to a debating framework suitable for exploring relations not only between north and south, east and west, but also between Europe's centres and peripheries.

3. This challenge is not the exclusive responsibility of single scholarly disciplines. It requires networking readiness to discern the width and depth of knowledge and action perspectives, to cross the boundaries of specialties in search for alternative approaches (see the Innovation in Tackling the Challenge section below), and to test their implementation conditions. It thus requires cooperative, comparative research to advance new interpretations by linking formerly unrelated concepts and arguments to overcome the gap from theory to political reform:

(a) *First*, civic rights are legal norms and institutional devices, as well as moral values and political ideals. These four conceptual dimensions are combined, and confused, in ordinary practices and political debates. They are usually conflated as institutional realities and moral values, in spite of having different statuses. To research their complexity entails acknowledging the inescapable ambivalence produced by the interplay between legal norms, institutional devices, moral values, and political ideals.

(b) *Second*, democracy is both a form of government and a political ideal. As a form of government it is constitutionally devised as a rights-based political regime. By embodying the ideal of self-government, democracy matches the highest aspirations of rights claims, namely, the realization of civic rights in practice. In either case the array of expectations on democracy has grown overwhelmingly in recent times, in particular those expectations related to democracies' capacity to address civic claims.

4. Thinking about democracy means thinking about rights, and the converse can be easily argued too. However, this apparent semantic, and even practical, fluidity from rights to democracy conceals their complex conceptual, historical, and institutional layouts. The point is to critically unravel them. Yet, it requires its spread to a wide public debate engaging also non-academic agents to influence the political agenda (see sections 1.2.2 and 1.3.3 below).

B) SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

I) RESEARCH COORDINATION OBJECTIVES

1. The Meaning of RECAST

(a) The title makes a reference to the double condition of participant scholars, who have a political, intellectual responsibility even when doing solely research. RECAST takes inspiration from Tony Judt's 2008 book *Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century*, which is an insightful composition of intellectual, ideological and political history, of moral and political thinking.

(b) *Civic Rights and Democracy* illustrates the strains produced by the universalizing claims of rights, most clearly of human rights, on the national character of democracies. Even though the democratic ideal is formulated in universalist terms, the historical practices of democracy are only achievable in non-universalist conditions. That fundamental tension is epitomized by the predicament of democratic citizenship, whose legal status gives access to universal rights, yet at the same time sets the political boundaries of non-universalist communities.

(c) *Reappraising Intellectual Debates* entails revaluing humanities' and social sciences' contributions to address the challenge. Current debates on the relations of civic rights and democracy in Europe reflect separate lines of scholarly work, which to a great extent reproduce

structural political and policy divisions. RECAST seeks to revamp the path connecting intellectual debates, public debates, politics, and policy action.

2. This is compellingly the case of immigration, whose jurisdiction is part of the ‘reserved domain’ of states – being the European Union’s role confined to issuing recommendations for policy consistency among states. Recent history, since the early 2000s, reveals a uniform trend, namely, that national differences remain in matters of immigrants’ rights, while convergence is reached in policing strategies. Scholarly production attests to this pattern. EU law and politics research typically adopts a descriptive approach, whereas philosophical accounts tend to present normative proposals thereof.

3. Yet, what is disconnectedly researched, remains disconnected in public debates. Its understanding turns out to be partial when informing politics and policy action, as the 2015 new migrant crisis has revealed. To address the claims of civic rights and democracy, Europe’s political configurations and entangled histories provide a scarcely explored ground for transnational, interdisciplinary debates. Through their crossings new arguments (historical, moral, legal, and political) can be advanced.

4. RECAST accordingly brings together in a collaborative network scholars, research groups, and centres in humanities and social sciences, as well as non-academic stakeholders (from journalists to social and political agents) to explore the conceptual, argumentative, and institutional responses that address the challenge of civic rights to the practices of democracy. The Action aims to:

- (a) Map the European debates on civic rights claims and democracy.
- (b) Study how the languages of democracy and rights draw on civic practices, and how they compare throughout Europe.
- (c) Shed light on how their conceptual resources are used in historical, moral, legal, ideological, and political arguments about the relations of civic rights and democracy.
- (d) Examine the argumentative paths linking intellectual debates with political agendas to try out unexplored ways of informing political reforms.

II) CAPACITY-BUILDING OBJECTIVES

Drawing on more than two decades of transnational, collaborative research involving predoctoral and early postdoctoral researchers, together with mid-career and established scholars, the Action definitely aspires to increase its members’ research, networking, and impact capacity by:

1. *Strengthening interdisciplinary cooperation.* An object easier said than done, mostly because the pursuit of specialization runs opposite to scholarly cooperation in humanities and social sciences, it highlights a basic challenge in the advancement of knowledge. An interdisciplinary network entails a balance between scholarly approaches. It further requires their effective coordination through communication and debate. In this sense, networking teaches a clear lesson: methodological pluralism proves to be a necessary condition in the search for innovative results. Along with the series of joint activities (open to the participation of network members and *Ad hoc* Participants, based on a gender-balance aim), Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) enhance the forms of cooperation through international mobility.

2. *Expanding its international membership.* To meet the Action’s objective, cooperation can only be set up between international partners. Along with the contributions from different scholarly approaches, the kind of collaborative research needed points out to a growing international network of scholars, research groups, and centres, as well as non-academic stakeholders, from sixteen COST Member Countries, a Near Neighbour Country, a Cooperating State, and an International Partner Country (see the Network as a Whole section below). Their different academic traditions and expertise resources enrich, and actually make

possible, the network. All activities help to achieve this capacity-building objective, but especially propitious are the exploratory workshops of each Working Group (WG), and the STSMs throughout the Action's time span. Missions are coordinated with the Training School seminars.

3. *Developing an integrated, interdisciplinary training programme.* Meant initially for young researchers, and relying on previous experience in training workshops, the formative scheme is open to all participants as a chance for engaging in methodological enquiries. Arguably methodological innovations have to be tested in debates among alternative approaches. Against the background of the challenge the Training School's programme will cover humanities research methods and approaches, from conceptual to intellectual history, from moral to political argumentation and analysis, evincing how their updates involve the recourse to social science research methods. Moreover, the programme will test those updates against real political problems. That way, being a meeting platform open to *Ad Hoc* Participants, from journalists to policy-makers, the Training School provides the conditions to improve the passage from theory to politics and policy.

4. *Focusing the Action as a networking programme of publications-oriented activities with the added aim of contributing to public debates.* One of the commitments of the Action is to contribute to ongoing scholarly debates. Accordingly, its activities, from training to exploratory and advanced research workshops to the final conference, proceed as publications-oriented. Joint publications are the Action's distinctive feature of the Dissemination networking tool. As they target both social media and scholarly outlets, dissemination is streamlined by the participation in public debates. To that end the involvement of journalists as well as social and political agents, namely, policy-makers, human rights and democracy activists, proves instrumental.

These four Capacity-building Objectives spell out the international and interdisciplinary character of the network. They legitimize teamwork and the internal junctions among networking tools to share and spread knowledge advances.

C) PROGRESS BEYOND THE STATE-OF-THE-ART AND INNOVATION POTENTIAL

I) DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE-OF-THE-ART

The COST Action aims to recast the contributions of intellectual debates to the challenge of civic rights claims in European democracies. The scholarly production is mostly available from separate spheres, with notable exceptions that attest to the inescapable interdisciplinarity of the challenge.

1. Over the past six decades, rights have acquired a moral and political significance that goes well beyond the humanitarian advances in international law reached since the mid nineteenth century. Human rights represent not only a legal revolution in the international political order, but also an 'advocacy revolution' empowering people with a universal language to tackling injustices, and a foremost inspiration for social and political reforms across the world. Two major developments help to explain that practical prominence:

(a) *The rise of a human rights culture* after World War II, being its foundational document the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose preparatory proceedings since 1946 trace the fascinating itinerary of human rights debates into their first universal conceptualization. Developed by the twin International Treaties on Civil and Political Rights, and on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (1966, entry into force 1976), they have been strengthened by a series, and gradually by a system, of international and regional human rights law instruments.

(b) The *setting up of a debating arena around human rights issues*. Clearly an interdisciplinary achievement, one of its recurrent questions is the difficult but necessary coupling of the universalist language of human rights with the contingent circumstances of particular cases – a tension that reveals the distance between moral, ideological, legal, and political views, becoming especially apparent in the application of law, both domestic and international.

2. After an enthusiastic support for the idea of democratic rule since 1989, barely a decade afterwards democracies began to be criticized on account of their defective performance, sharply contrasted with the alleged superiority of their normative ideals. As a result, promoting democracy has been eloquently argued as coming only after ‘breaking democracy’s spell’. Two major attitudes and trends of changes help to explain such puzzling situation:

(a) The neglect of history that overlooks the rise of representative government through the nineteenth century, and its gradual reshape into representative, liberal, parliamentary democracy. The lack of knowledge about the history, institutional complexity, and the plurality of representative democracies (see e.g. the different indexes of democratization) seemingly underlies scepticism towards parliamentary democracy.

(b) Anti-parliamentarism as a form of anti-systemic reaction, reminiscent of early twentieth-century criticism, has disquietingly become an integral part of many right and left populist parties, especially since the 2000s, from France to Poland and Hungary, from the Netherlands to Germany and the Nordic countries. In less than fifteen years not only have they changed the European landscape of local governments. They are nurturing government options at both national and supranational politics.

II) PROGRESS BEYOND THE STATE-OF-THE-ART

A distinctive feature of the state-of-the-art is the critical diagnosis of European democracies’ capacity to take on the challenge of civic rights claims. RECAST examines the arguments presented and further explores the passage from criticism to reform.

1. *Arguments for Criticism*

If during the 2000s democratic regimes old and new were mainly discredited for the oligarchic effects of party systems, for being inefficient, for not being pluralist enough, participatory enough, deliberative enough, a decade later European democracies’ loss of reputation was attributed to their faulty reactions, against populist alternatives, in addressing the challenge of ethnic, religious, and civil diversity. A lack of coordinating leadership among European democracies and their slow, and partly failed, policies can be argued as underlying causes.

Such predicament epitomizes what seemed an unlikely change of perception some decades ago, when democracy was considered an unrivalled regime ‘with no enemies’. It first became the object of acerbic criticism by intellectuals from the entire ideological spectrum, and it has gradually become the object of mistrust and contempt by a part of publics in liberal democracies (the ‘uncounted’ arguably can even ‘hate’ it) whose reactions have produced a paradoxical ‘counter-democratic’ defence of democracy. Yet they come close to ‘anti-political’ moves aiming at reinventing democracy.

2. *From Criticism to Reform*

On the whole, recent anti-political, moralizing, populist and plebiscitary reactions all over Europe are ‘disfiguring’ democracy by displacing the centre of gravity in the debates from real to ideal, or idealized, forms of democracy; and by focusing the political attention on decisions, or ‘decisionist’ moves, instead of proceduralized deliberative debates. Admitting democracies’ flaws, reforms are being argued in two directions, focused respectively:

(a) On institutional engineering by assuming that effective reactions can only proceed from multi-level, coordinated action among stakeholders. The language of 'democratic governance' has in this respect become a mainstream reference to figure out how to tackle global problems.

(b) On re-politicizing the understanding of the challenge of civic rights claims to democracies, to improve the implementation of political solutions.

As regards the former, the appeal to democratic governance, however, keeps a difficult balance between managerial and political solutions, which can be questioned on the grounds of its marginal attention to the central issue of democratic representativeness. As regards the latter, civic rights claims affect critical aspects of democratic ruling that remind of the centrality of representative politics, and moreover, of the need for shared intelligence and increased international cooperation to address them.

III) INNOVATION IN TACKLING THE CHALLENGE

1. Deepening this research path, RECAST revises two reductionist views on the capacity of European democracies to meet the challenge of civic rights claims. Both views hinder the understanding not just of the challenge, but also of its treatment:

(a) The widespread assumption that the 'accommodation of conflicting rights' is mainly contingent on the particular political circumstances of each country.

(b) The outlook of parliamentary democracies, appreciable in mainstream debates, that dismisses the fact, pointed out already by Bryce, Ostrogorski, and Weber, that democratization, namely, the spread and deepening of democracy, proceeds in parallel with the professionalization of politics and bureaucratization.

As regards the former view, comparative experience teaches that it is no longer the case and, rather, that transnational cooperation becomes an indispensable condition. As for the latter, movement politics and other alternatives to further democratization, mainly focused around the ideal of deliberative democracy, instrumental as they are, cannot do away with institutional politics.

2. RECAST's innovation potential lies in its capacity to provide new insights into the links (theoretical, political, and institutional) between civic rights and democracy in Europe. A worthy benchmark in addressing them is the Council of Europe-commissioned report *Living Together: Combining Diversity and Freedom in 21st-Century Europe* (2011). The report persuasively relates human rights issues with democratic performance shedding light on the chances to improve the correspondence between intellectual and public debates with political reforms. It outlines a number of 'strategic recommendations' to provide a Europe-wide democratic understanding of immigration policies and citizenship laws.

3. The Action distinctly resumes part of those advices in two directions:

First, assuming that methodological pluralism is a facilitating condition in the search for innovative results, it draws on the cooperative research of WGs to outline a transnational comparative approach.

Second, engaging scholars and non-academic stakeholders, it creates a debating perspective to enhance the paths from intellectual to public debates, and from public debates to politics and policy action.

4. Reappraising intellectual debates entails revaluing their contributions to the challenge making visible to wider publics the outcomes of transnational, interdisciplinary research produced by the Action's WGs, reaching out social and political agents in their attempt to influence political reforms.

D) ADDED VALUE OF NETWORKING

I) IN RELATION TO THE CHALLENGE

1. The broadness and entanglement of the challenge, spread throughout Europe, demand for shared intelligence through networking in ways that have not been earlier sufficiently explored. To this end, RECAST argues that:

First, the crossing spaces between humanities and social sciences disciplines and the ensuing methodological debates create a research crossroads apt to opening up new approaches.

Second, those approaches substantiate the permeability of disciplinary borders, illustrated by more argumentatively- and historically-oriented social sciences accounts and better institutionally- and legally-informed humanities research.

Third, exploring the new approaches becomes a facilitating condition for innovative research.

Fourth, to make it recognizable, the Action relies on the premise that good research has to be publishable in scholarly outlets, but to inform politics it also has to overcome the barrier of academic jargon to reach, initially, the Action's stakeholders and then, public debates.

2. To address the challenge, Europe's political configurations and shared histories provide a fruitful ground for transnational, interdisciplinary debates. It is through their crossings that new arguments, historical, moral, legal, political, ideological, can be advanced, and new insights can be achieved.

3. Drawing on the networking capacity of the Proposers, RECAST brings together predoctoral and early postdoctoral researchers (Early Career Investigators) with mid-career and established scholars. The Action keeps further balances as regards research profiles, gender, institutions, and countries. Concerning the latter indicators, it keeps so also by engaging other participants (from scholars to journalists to policy-makers, human rights and democracy activists), from public and public institutions in countries covering Europe's centres and peripheries.

II) IN RELATION TO EXISTING EFFORTS AT EUROPEAN AND/OR INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

1. There have been a number of international projects dealing with partially similar issues. Funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Programme, for example, the projects EUIMAGINE: *Imagining Europe from the Outside: On the Role of Democracy and Human Rights Perceptions in Constructing Migration Aspirations and Decisions Towards Europe*, running from 2010 to 2013 (http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/94295_en.html); and RESIST: *Human Rights versus Democracy? Towards a Conceptual Genealogy of Skepticism About Human Rights in Contemporary Political Thought*, running from 2010 to 2016 (http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/96334_en.html). These and other valuable projects have contributed to begin tackling close challenges. What distinguishes RECAST is, first, the series of balances that it forges between research profiles, rank, gender, institutions, and countries that make the network run and grow; and second, its focus on debates from complementary perspectives: the practice of debating as the means to explore methodological experimentation, the joint humanities and social sciences contribution to scholarly debates usually held in separate spheres, or the attention to public debates involving also non-academic stakeholders as a crucial interface between intellectual debates and politics.

2. Overall, the Action's Coordination and Capacity-Building Objectives address some of the central challenges to the social sciences and the humanities formulated within the European Union Framework Programme Horizon 2020. In particular, those included in the section

Europe in a Changing World – Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective Societies (<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/europe-changing-world-inclusive-innovative-and-reflective-societies>). From the initial Work Programme 2016–2017 (http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html#h2020-work-programmes-2016-17), RECAST fits in with a number of research and innovation actions such as CO-CREATION-09-2016: A European map of knowledge production and co-creation in support of research and innovation for societal challenges; ENG-GLOBALLY-01-2017: Strengthening Europe’s position in the global context: science diplomacy and intercultural relations; CULT-COOP-01-2017: Democratic discourses and the rule of law; or CULT-COOP-10-2017: Culture, integration and European public space). RECAST does so by setting up an international, humanities and social sciences network aiming to address the challenge of civic rights claims to the practices of democracy in Europe. From 2010 to 2016 (OC-2016-1) no similar COST Action has been approved.

2) IMPACT

A) EXPECTED IMPACT

I) SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND/OR SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS

As regards the expected impacts, RECAST works upon two premises: the first is that activities organized by the network are devised as publications-oriented activities, while the second is that networking relies on research cooperation and the involvement of other stakeholders, namely, journalists and social and political agents concerned with the challenge. The table below presents the articulation of socioeconomic, technological, and scientific expected impacts of the Action. To facilitate their measurement, they are distributed in short-term (within the first two years), mid-term (since the third year) and long-term (since the fifth year) perspectives.

	SHORT-TERM IMPACT	MID- AND LONG-TERM IMPACT
SOCIOECONOMIC	<p><i>Widening the Forms of Scholarly Inclusion, Cooperation, and Visibility</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing together new generations of researchers with mid-career and established scholars, along with non-academic stakeholders • Establishing transnational, gender- and research profile-balanced cooperative networking open to <i>Ad Hoc</i> Participants • Opening up Europe-wide, centres–peripheries integrative networking dialogue 	<p><i>Bridging the Gap Between Intellectual Debates, Politics, and Policy Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlining the paths from scholarly to public and policy debates through interventions in media outlets (tacit and codified knowledge) • Engaging non-academic stakeholders (journalists, social and political agents, policy-experts) in the programme • Revaluing intellectual debates as a resource for democratic responses to civic rights claims
TECHNOLOGICAL	<p><i>Building Viable Research Paths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing novel methodological approaches and scholarly practices • Outlining alternative theory-practice perspectives to address the challenge • Setting up the Training School in the HUM and the SSC by bringing together scholars, research groups, institutes, and <i>Ad Hoc</i> Participants from across Europe 	<p><i>From Recognition to Usefulness</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing methodological pluralism as a condition for research breakthroughs • Implementing methodological advances in tackling the challenge to improve diagnosis and political action • Arguing curricular updates from the relevance of humanities' and social sciences' joint approaches to societal applications
SCIENTIFIC	<p><i>From Criticism to Scholarly Changes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing argumentatively- and historically-oriented social science research • Developing institutionally- and legally-informed humanities research • Contributing to ongoing scholarly and public debates related to the challenge, and enhancing international mobility aimed primarily at ECI 	<p><i>Delivering Research Outcomes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing the outcomes in target international journals and academic publishers (codified knowledge) • Enlightening public debates in social media outlets and newspapers • Contributing to the interdisciplinary map in the European Research Area (ERA). The Action's results can be used in the future by other actions, projects, and stakeholders

II) PLAN FOR INVOLVING THE MOST RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

1. *Identifying the Stakeholders.* Given the thematic focus and the civic scope of the challenge, two broad groups of stakeholders are directly relevant to the Action. The first group consists of academics from humanities and social sciences, namely, historians, political scientists, philosophers, and legal scholars. The second group consists of social and political agents, mostly from civil associations and political parties, policy experts, and journalists.
2. *Involving Academics together with Social and Political Agents, Policy Experts, and Journalists.* Since the preparatory works of the COST application a first touchdown is advanced by the Network of Proposers. Its members perform an inestimable early networking function by approaching potential participants. In a later phase that function is assumed by the Management Committee (MC) in coordination with the leaders of both the four Working Groups (WGs) and the Training School.
3. *Finding a Reasonable Balance.* Both groups of stakeholders share basic interests. They speak though different idioms – the academics’ being mainly scholarly, whereas the social and political agents’ is clearly civic. Between both, journalists play a mediating role by informing about their different claims and contributions, that way, first, facilitating their mutual understanding, and second, making accessible to the general public both tacit and codified knowledge on the challenge.

This condition makes all the more necessary the role of the MC in ensuring that the network’s balances (research profiles, rank, gender, institutions, and countries) contribute to a further balance between scholarly and civic idioms. That balance grows out of the Action’s different forms of collaborative research. Both the WG workshops and the Training School seminars are suitable environments for social and political agents, policy-makers and journalists to get involved as *Ad hoc* Participants. This will make possible that their contributions become an integral part to the Action’s deliverables.

III) DISSEMINATION AND/OR EXPLOITATION PLAN

1. RECAST’s major activities, from Working Group workshops to Training School in the Humanities and the Social Sciences seminars to STSMs, inter-group seminars and the final conference, are devised as publications-oriented activities, ranging from publicistic to policy and scholarly publications. As shown in the GANTT Diagram below, the Action spreads the publications programme beginning in the second year, 2019, through 2022. It is a reasonably productive scheme that engages all Action participants in different types of joint publications.
2. To achieve the objective of each Working Group producing at least two joint publications (edited journal special issue or section, edited book), combined with contributions from the Training School seminars, the publications programme is grounded on the idea of distributing editing responsibilities among Action participants. More specifically, four strategies underpin the Action’s publications programme:

first, setting up co-editing formulas; *second*, achieving rank and gender balance, as well as specialty and country plurality regarding both the editorial responsibility and the authors teams; *third*, engaging journalists as critical observers and participants; *fourth*, enhancing the dissemination plan with publicistic contributions to media outlets, from newspapers to social media.
3. RECAST shares the Pilot on Open Research Data of the Horizon 2020 (http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/funding/reference_docs.html#h2_020-work-programmes-2016-17) with respect to the dissemination of, and access to, the research data generated by the network. Part of that information will be accessible at the Action’s website and will be further spread through the media. Some journalists will become

indeed *Ad hoc* Participants, drawing on the experience that several proposers regularly contribute to media outlets and other participants keep parallel journalistic activities.

4. Because of their focus, target journals from humanities and social sciences are chosen, such as *Citizenship Studies*, *Constellations*, *Contemporary Political Theory*, *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, *Democratization*, *East European Politics and Societies*, *European Journal of Political Theory*, *Futures*, *Global Intellectual History*, *Government and Opposition*, *History of European Ideas*, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, *Journal of Political Ideologies*, *Journal of Political Philosophy*, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, *Public Reason*, *Redescriptions*, *Representations*. The journals' profiles fit in with the Action's interdisciplinary perspective. Of international publishers, because of their expertise in interdisciplinary, comparative accounts, Ashgate (Research Companion series), Berghahn (European Conceptual History series), Brill, Budrich, Cambridge, CEU Press, Edinburgh (Contestations and Reconfigurations: Studies in Comparative Political Theory & Intel. History), Nomos (Politics-Debates-Concepts), Oxford, Polity, Routledge, Springer.

Regarding the development of the publishing programme, editors will keep regular communication with their respective WGs and the MC. See below the section on Management Structures and Procedures.

B) POTENTIAL FOR INNOVATION VERSUS RISK LEVEL

I) POTENTIAL FOR SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL AND/OR SOCIOECONOMIC INNOVATION BREAKTHROUGHS

The Action relies on decades of international networking. It goes a step further by getting together humanities and social science scholars from different national academic traditions and non-academic stakeholders. Its network of collaborative research will reassess the ways in which questions of rights claims and democracy have been addressed in Europe over the past three decades.

1. *Risk Level*. Practicing interdisciplinary research causes a number of drawbacks or side-effects which in fact become challenges:

- (a) A loss of epistemological security.
- (b) A estrangement effect from original scholarly profiles when crossing disciplinary boundaries.
- (c) Difficulties in career promotion as assessment committees tend to estimate more typical specialized rather than interdisciplinary profiles.
- (d) Publishing difficulties as scholarly journals compete on the basis of highly focused scopes.
- (e) The communicative difficulty of spreading outcomes to the general public and reaching out non-academic stakeholders.

2. *Potential for Innovation*. RECAST disproves the naiveté of thinking of research in stereotyped terms, and advocates the advantages of interdisciplinary research guided by excellence standards:

- (a) The Action undertakes interdisciplinary research based on a balance of methodological and epistemic affinities and dissimilarities.
- (b) Such balance makes possible debating the crossings of disciplinary boundaries to explore new approaches, which in turn becomes a condition for breakthroughs.
- (c) To this end, the series of publications-oriented activities dynamizes human resources from a number of institutions; in a constructive way, that gives international visibility to research in humanities and social sciences oriented to tackle political problems.

(d) It further upgrades the international mobility of scholars and it relies on the concurrent involvement of social and political agents and journalists to achieve technological and socioeconomic impacts.

3) IMPLEMENTATION

A) DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK PLAN

I) DESCRIPTION OF WORKING GROUPS

To coordinate the cooperative research, the network is structured into four transnational, interdisciplinary WGs, formed around the challenge's argumentative markers: Practices – Languages and Ideologies – Concepts – Debates. Their objectives and tasks develop the enlightening potential of their members' expertise focuses. They are reflected in turn in the series of activities and committed deliverables (tacit and codified knowledge).

1. Objectives and Tasks of the Four Working Groups

Common Tasks: The four WGs share the tasks of (1) engaging non-academic stakeholders in their activities with the aims of producing integrated knowledge; and (2) spreading it through publicistic and scholarly channels to reach out wider publics and improve its impact.

Practices

Objectives: Researching (1) the civic practices regarding civic rights claims, exercise of rights, conflicts of rights; (2) the democratic practices, in particular deliberative practices, of civic agents (individuals and groups), and their representations and ambivalent effects on democracy's own growth and how they compare transnationally.

Task: Exploring the civic practices (institutional and non-institutional) in the conflicts of civic rights and democracy in Europe.

Languages and Ideologies

Objectives: Researching (1) the languages of rights and democracy, namely, their pragmatic uses, their rhetorical, and ideological dimensions, and their unfolding in public actions; (2) their histories both singular and crossed throughout Europe.

Task: Appraising the pragmatic and ideological resources used by social and political agents to advance their civic claims.

Concepts

Objectives: Researching (1) the semantic changes of civic concepts, outlining their comparative, transnational study; (2) their critical uses in arguments on rights and democracy from historical, moral, political, legal, and public non-scholarly perspectives.

Task: Dissecting the conceptual clusters social and political agents, and scholars, use in their arguments.

Debates

Objectives: Researching (1) the argumentative links connecting practices with concepts and arguments in debates; (2) the practices and procedures of historical, moral, political, and legal debates on civic rights and democracy, with special attention to the ways in which they are addressed in parliamentary democracies.

Task: Mapping the scholarly and public debates on civic rights and democracy in Europe.

2. Shared Activities, Milestones, and Major Deliverables of the four Working Groups

WGs Activities: 2018 exploratory (kick-off) meetings – 2019 publications-oriented Workshops (I) – 2020 publications-oriented Workshops (II).

Inter-Group activities: 2021 Inter-Group meeting (assessing the inter- and intra-group experience, the state of the dissemination/publications programme, contributions by *Ad Hoc* Participants and further cooperation plans) – 2021 final, all-group conference.

Membership and networking: 2018–20 STSMs (international mobility aimed primarily to ECI).

Milestones: Annual *assessment* of the groups' functioning *at each workshop* from 2018 to 2021, together with the *review provided by MC annual meetings* from 2018 to 2021.

Major Deliverables: 2018–21 contribution (teaching and learning) to Training School in the HUM and the SSC related to the Action's main aim (*tacit knowledge*), along with early scholarly publications and contributions to media outlets, from newspapers to social media (*codified knowledge*) – 2019–22 production by each WG of at least two joint publications (edited journal special issue or section, edited book), group members' scholarly papers, media pieces and policy papers (*codified knowledge*).

3. Membership and Work Plan

Each Working Group organizes a series of activities of its own, from exploratory (kick-off) to research seminars, which are also open to other scholars through public calls and, in particular, to *Ad hoc* Participants who contribute with non-academic knowledge to the proceedings. Membership, based on meritocratic inclusion, can range from fifteen to twenty-five participants in each group. Combining their expertise areas, group members contribute both to a programme of formative activities (Training School in the Humanities and the Social Sciences seminars, aimed primarily at young scholars but open to all other participants), and to the Network's Coordination Objectives (further details are presented in the Network section below). Over four years, tentatively from the end of 2017 to the end of 2021, the Work Plan aims to distribute networking tools rationally. As a way of enhancing the networking capacity of the Action, workshops are organized in cooperation with research groups and centres; likewise, part of the seminars of the Training School are organized in cooperation with a research school and several research institutes. Please see the following GANTT Diagram

II) GANTT DIAGRAM

RECAST	2018				2019				2020				2021			
	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter												
<i>Reappraising Intellectual Debates on Civic Rights & Democracy in Europe</i> Timeline 2018–2021																
2018 MC Meeting: procedures, responsibilities, 2018-19 activities																
Working G. Practices: 2018 Expl. Meeting																
Working Group Languages and Ideologies: 2018 Exploratory Meeting																
Working G. Concepts: 2018 Expl. Meeting																

its programme of activities. Provisions are made through the management structures and procedures to have the contingency plan effective since the Action's early stages.

B) MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES

As a network structured into four transnational, interdisciplinary Working Groups, RECAST relies on a balance between centralizing and decentralizing management mechanisms aimed at facilitating the coordination of objectives, tasks, activities, milestones, and deliverables. Likewise, whenever COST rules allow, it functions through a series of deliberative practices and democratic decision-making procedures.

Management Structures

According to COST rules, the Management Committee assumes an executive role (coordination, implementation, and management of the Action's activities, as well as supervision of both allocation and use of funding). Its executive function is performed on the basis of a pluralist mechanism of internal (from the MC itself) and external (from the WGs and MC Observers) checks and balances, together with COST's regular supervision of the Action's activities.

During the time span of the Action, the MC will hold five meetings: September 2017 initial meeting (distribution of responsibilities, procedures, networking, plan for involving the most relevant stakeholders, programme of 2018 and 2019 activities) – November 2018 (assessing the network's performance, dissemination-publications programme, 2019 and 2020 activities) – November 2019 meeting (assessing the network's performance, dissemination-publications programme, 2020 and 2021 activities) – November 2020 meeting (assessing the network's performance, dissemination-publications programme, 2021 activities) – December 2021 (final report and further planning).

The four WGs operate with relative, though substantial, autonomy from the MC regarding the organization of their activities. This is so ever since their respective 2018 exploratory meetings through the series of two workshops held by each WG in 2019 and 2020. Fluid communication is kept with the MC.

Procedures

Teamwork and networking rely, when COST rules allow, on deliberative, parliamentary-like practices and democratic decision-making procedures. At the MC and the WGs decisions follow simple majority rule. Differences are settled through deliberative, namely, argumentative or debating practices which encourage the widest possible participation of Action members. By default every activity ends with a business meeting, which is in part an evaluative moment. Hence, review becomes an integral part of the network's procedures, as argued above in section 3.1.4. In this sense, in the summer of 2021 an inter-group meeting will be held, its functions being to assess the inter- and intra-group experience, the state of the dissemination/publications programme, and further cooperation plans.

A most defining moment in the network are the initial meetings of the MC and the WGs. There, after deliberation about expertise areas, gender, rank and country balances, responsibilities are distributed among Action members. They are of different kind: at the MC (where gender balance is to be enhanced over that of the initial Network of Proposers), MC Members, namely, representatives of countries participating in the Network, Action Chair, MC Observers, Training School leaders; at the Working Groups, WG Members, WG leaders, and *Ad hoc* Participants (from social agents to journalists, politicians and policy experts). Furthermore, at the MC, distribution of organizing responsibilities; and at the WGs, distribution of organizing-convening, editing, and publicistic (codified knowledge) responsibilities.

Relevant information (reports of activities) from WGs and the Training School is forwarded to the MC. Easily available and easy-to-use communication devices, from chats to teleconferences, make possible internal communication in the network. Lastly, the dissemination scheme begins by setting up the Action's website, where public information on working lines and activities is posted, and is followed by the publication of outcomes in the media.

C) NETWORK AS A WHOLE

Interdisciplinary research requires a propitious balance between methodological and epistemic affinities and dissimilarities. Only then the crossing of disciplinary boundaries to explore new approaches becomes feasible and, therefore, a condition for socioeconomic, technological, and scientific breakthroughs. In the case of this COST Action, the conditions are created for the practice of more argumentatively- and historically-oriented social sciences research and better institutionally- and legally-informed humanities research to contribute to the intellectual debates on the relevance of civic rights claims for democracy.

Accordingly, the Network of Proposers constitutes a timely international alliance of scholars, research groups, and centres from across the humanities and the social sciences. By bringing together their expertise profiles and their national academic traditions, the COST Action raises the chances for novel forms of collaborative research. Initially, and open to further growth, they come from sixteen COST Member Countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom), a Cooperating State (Israel), a Near Neighbour Country (Russia), and an International Partner Country (South Africa).

In COST Member Countries the challenge puts to test the capacity of democratic regimes. As argued above in the section on Added Value of Networking, the broadness and entanglement of the challenge demand for shared intelligence, and this becomes a crucial aspect concerning the responses argued in comparable situations. Such are the cases of the Near Neighbour Country, Russia, and the International Partner Country, South Africa. For complementary reasons, the contributions of participants from each country enrich the forms of cooperation by enlarging the analytical and practical perspectives of debates. The practice of humanities and social sciences in Russia and South Africa echo the effects of two contrasting, most valuable experiences of democracy and civic rights from which mutual benefits can be attained.

On the whole RECAST provides the necessary resources to address the challenge. The network builds teamwork by recasting and enhancing previous international cooperation with new forms of resourceful collaborative research. This goes across disciplines in humanities and social sciences, and ranges from moral and political philosophy to conceptual history, intellectual history, aesthetics, political theory, comparative politics, and international law. The programme of activities, based on rank and gender balance as well as specialty and country plurality, involves predoctoral and early postdoctoral researchers, together with mid-career and established scholars, along with non-academic stakeholders from across Europe to meet the Action's objectives.