

Minutes of the 1st Management Committee Meeting of the COST Action

CA18126 – Writing Urban Places. New Narratives of the European City

COST Association, Av. Louise 149, 1050 Brussels

Brussels, 15th February 2019

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ACTION Status

- Action parties: 28 COST countries
- CSO approval: 13/11/2018
- Start date: 15/03/2019

1) Agenda and Materials

The agenda is in Annex 1. The meeting was organised following a participatory methodology. The presentations given throughout the day are in Annex 2: The supporting materials on networking tools and tasks of the Management Committee are in Annex 3 and 4.

2) Participants and Hosting Team

Mickael Pero (Science Officer assigned for this Action) and Olga Gorczyca (Administrative Officer assigned to this Action) hosted the meeting. Further colleagues from the COST Association supported the hosting team in the afternoon session “How to manage the COST Action”.

The hosting team welcomed the participants (list in Annex 6). The participants introduced themselves and expressed their main interest for their participation in this COST Action.

3) Pre-requisites for the Decision Making

During the day, the participants acknowledged and agreed to comply with the Rules of Procedure for the Management Committee were presented and read by the meeting participants from Annex I *COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment (COST 134/14: [http://www.cost.eu/download/COST Action Management Monitoring and Final Assessment](http://www.cost.eu/download/COST_Action_Management_Monitoring_and_Final_Assessment))*.

Before any decision was taken, the SO verified that the minimum of 2/3 of the parties present, the necessary quorum was achieved allowing the Management Committee meeting to officially take place in accordance with Article 9 of the Rules of Procedure for the Management Committee (see [http://www.cost.eu/download/COST Action Management Monitoring and Final Assessment](http://www.cost.eu/download/COST_Action_Management_Monitoring_and_Final_Assessment)).

4) Relevant Information to the Management Committee

During the day, the hosting team provided the MC with information on:

- The main features of the COST programme and the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy.
- The COST Actions, participation in COST Actions, the networking tools and the financial rules for their implementation and the COST Grant System.
- The rules for the reimbursement of expenses for attending meetings and/or give training in training schools.
- The tasks for managing the Action.

5) Discussions on the Action Aims, Implementation and Management

a. MoU Tasks and Deliverables: Working Group Meetings + Use of the COST networking tools

After an introduction by the Main Proposer, the participants divided in Working Groups for discussing the tasks and deliverables. The results are presented below.

Following, the hosting team presented the COST Actions, the networking tools and financial rules. The participants returned to the WGs to discuss the funding of the activities needed to achieve the Action Objectives using the COST networking tools. The hosting team supported the WGs on the discussions clarifying the COST rules and giving examples of best practice. The results were used as input for the draft proposal for the Work and Budget Plan for the upcoming Grant Period discussed below in these minutes:

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| WG1: Science communication |
| Reported by: Jorge Mejía Hernández |
| MC members preliminarily listed as members of the WG1: Tadeja Zupancic , Marcel Pikhart, Ramona Mihaila, Marc Kosciejen, Susana Oliveira |
| <p>Summary of the Discussion Outcomes:</p> <p>The initial tasks of the group have been defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - devising instruments and strategies for internal (within the Action) and external (to peers, stakeholders, general public) communication. - facilitating and articulating communication between all the Action's WGs, by accommodating the leaders/coordinators of the other WGs within WG1 - organizing the information produced and exchanged by the Action, and defining different levels of accessibility to it. - tracing the impact of the Action in terms of communication - coordinating the production of the deliverables described in the MoU, plus an ongoing media strategy that can include a newsletter, a social media apparatus, and other media depending on the development of the Action. <p>WG1 established the following preliminary timeline of goals and events attached to those goals for the first period, based on the MoU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presenting of a Journal (Writingplace Journal No. 3), through a Workshop, in July 2019 (Belgrade) - Targeting relevant academic institutions, through different strategies of dissemination (peer to peer contact, academic events and publications), starting immediately (March 2019, Brussels) - Launching the Action's website, which comprises four different activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conceiving and designing the website, through a WG meeting and external (expert) advise, May 2019 (Brussels) b. Developing the technical aspects required to build, support and operate the website, through external (expert) advise, after May 2019 (Brussels) WG meeting |

- c. Launching the Action's website, through a workshop, and together with the presentation of a journal, July 2019 (Belgrade)
 - d. Maintaining and feeding the website, through external assistance and periodical WG meetings, on a regular basis after launching.
- Developing and maintaining a database with two levels of information: an internal repository of hard or rough data collected by WG4 (Fieldwork), and a more easily accessible repository of developed data produced (articles, papers, designs, images, etc.) and collected (reference texts or projects) by the Action. This activity will be achieved through external assistance, and coordinated through periodical WG meetings. A first pilot of this database can be expected for Fall 2019 (Delft).

Discussions of WG1 were further developed in a second afternoon session regarding Science Communication Management, which recognized the need for the communication strategy of the Action to evolve in time, by targeting the academic community at a first stage, communities and stakeholders from the studied cities at a second stage, selected media outlets at a third stage, and policymakers and other influential actors at a final stage.

This evolving communication strategy springs from the Action's quest for more inclusive cities – a goal which can be communicated easily and directly to all targets.

This second session included other potential members of WG1: (Matthew from Switzerland, one representative from the UK, and one representative from Croatia), and was assisted by a communications officer from COST (Karima Ben Salah).

WG2: Theoretical framework

Reported by: Matthew Skonsberg, Svava Riesto

MC members preliminarily listed as members of the WG2:

Svava Riesto, Henriette Steiner, Matthew Skonsberg, Kris Pint, Michael Kelly, Niki Vermeulen, Evanthia Tselica, Sonja Novak, Mirza Emirhafizovic, Juan A. Garcia-Esparza, Hanna Musiol, Lieven Ameel (2nd round of discussion)

Summary of the Discussion Outcomes:

The operations carried out by Working Group 2 are organized in three distinctive tasks:

Task 1: *Developing multi- and transdisciplinary ground for the investigation of urban narratives*

Task 2: *Conceptual reflections derived from the specifics of potential case studies. It will include an in- depth historical investigation of local urban narratives within medium-sized cities in Europe.*

Task 3: *Preview of key literature about theories and concepts relevant to narrative analysis of the European medium-sized cities.*

Discussion:

problematize / define the notion of medium-size European cities

develop a collective understanding of

a) meaningfulness: how do citizens assign meaning to places, what is the role of -minor?- literature)

b) appropriation: in social-spatial terms, how do people develop a sense of ownership and responsibility over their environment (NB we do not focus on (mis-) appropriation of concepts and ideas, which is an interesting discussion but not the focus of this Action)

c) integration: how can different social groups/communities develop a shared relationship regarding their environment

Ambitions WG2 for year 1:

-Literary inventory (journal issue?)

-Lexicon (relational vocabulary) of key terms: meaningfulness, appropriation, integration, narrative, mid-size city, participation

Networking tools: WG meeting, possibly STSM for research/exchange, workshop (possibly publish journal issue)

WG3: Methodological framework

Reported by: Lorin Niculae and Mark Proosten

MC members preliminarily listed as members of the WG3: Lorin Niculae, Mark Proosten, Viktorija Bogdanova, Jüri Soolep, Negar Ahmadpoor, Kinga Kimic, Konstantinos Ionnandis, Lieven Ameel (to WG2?), Ivana Racetin, Luc Pauwels

Summary of the Discussion Outcomes:

The objectives of WG3 include the investigation and development of appropriate analytical and projective methods to understand narratives of European medium-size cities, and to develop new strategies, scenarios and guidelines for future urban and architectural visions.

One important objective of WG3 is to ensure the rigour of the research.
The operations carried out by WG3 are organized in three distinctive tasks:

Task 1: Investigating the possibility of cross-disciplinary tools and techniques to be used in the process of research.

Task 2: Preview of key literature about methodologies and concepts relevant to narrative analysis of the European medium-sized cities.

Task 3: Exploring and testing the possibilities of identified methodologies and tools through site-specific workshops in cooperation with WG4.

Discussion:

Group members mention the importance of working simultaneously with all four working groups from the start. Otherwise important time and energy would fail at the end of the four year period.

The group therefore discussed current applied methods and tools of each to the participants and the importance of gathering these as an initial framework.

1 Investigating the possibility of crossdisciplinary tools and techniques
Formulating inclusions and exclusions
Formulating the research questions/ hypothesis

2 Preview of key literature about methodology + key case-studies (with WP2)

Collecting existing knowledge on the subject. Setting the boundaries of the studies (language, time frame, type of text etc)

Identifying gaps in knowledge
Confirming/ reformulating the hypothesis

3 Exploring and testing methods & tools (with WG4)

Evaluating the answer of the identified methods and tools to the research questions.
Confronting methods with architectural and urban practices.
Direct/ mediated application of methods to design.

4 Articulate a reflexive methodology

Methods will focus on praxeology and will include direct interaction, experiments, debates etc.
Paradigms: connectivity, transdisciplinarity. Analysis of issues related with politics/ policies, economy and ethics. Risk analysis and barriers to implementation assessment.

Activities & network tools related to tasks.

This group forms the link between theory (WG2) and fieldwork (WG4), working group meetings and events could and should be combined.

Defining the field of research: methods for sampling, data selection and critical data analysis with WG2.

Tools for data collection: where and how, in order to be accessible to all project researchers. Data bases. (WG1-4)

Define the appropriate set of methods, tools and instruments, starting from the objectives of the project with WG2.

Collecting existing knowledge and ongoing research, make inventory:
WG meeting
workshop (combined with WG meeting)
STSM (to explore and test tools and techniques)

Preview literature
WG meeting combined with WG2
web-based with open access for actions participants for both theory and case-study examples

Evaluate methods & tools (link WG4 fieldwork)
WG meeting combined with WG4

WG4: Field work

Reported by: Slobodan Veleviski, Hanna Musiol, Romi Mikulinsky

MC members preliminarily listed as members of the WG4:

Slobodan Veleviski, Luis Santiago Baptista, Marija Mano Velevska, Romi Mikulinsky, Lamila Simsic Pasic, Adrienne Cszimady, Hanna Musiol (to WG2), Dace Bula, Emilio Gallardo, Lukasz Wróblewski, Niki Vermeulen

Summary of the Discussion Outcomes:

The site-specific studies will form the core of the WG4 fieldwork activities. Each study consists of two phases, an analytical and a projective phase. The analytical phase gives an account of the social spatial practices in urban territories characterized by the heritage of differences by means of mapping and narrative techniques. For this phase, close corporation with WG 2 and 3 are necessary. In the projective phase, based on the results of the analytical phase, this package develops scenarios for (re) interpretation of social and cultural differences and production of meaningful architecture and urban space where different spatial and societal practices can coexist. Identifying and connecting the different stakeholders will be an important part of this WG.

The WG identifies the following tasks;

Task 1: precedents studies/ historical and theoretical framework;

Task 2: Identifying and collecting site specific narratives, history and challenges (atmospheres);

Task 3: Organization of site-specific workshops in combination with the WG3. Combining both the findings of the WG 2 and 3, together with connecting expertise with the different stakeholders.

- *Keywords of the preliminary discussion:* inclusive / desegregated city spaces, expanded of narratives of place/ critical readings of space, participatory archiving of urban history and memory
- *Locations:* The work should include various specific and diverse urban sites like Sarajevo, Cieszyn, Riga, Jerusalem, Skopje, small-size Spanish cities, Trondheim etc. not necessary connected only to the mid-sized cities (the group discussed and generally agreed that the meaning of the term mid-sized city could be expanded beyond its quantitative constraints).
- *Field work, literary / narrative practices:* By using existing literary practices, methods and approaches, group members discussed about possibilities for the “field work” using their experiences such as narratology and multimodal storytelling (visual, literary, oral) useful in remaking the urban space; we also reflected on the literary imaginations of cities, that is the importance of fictive imaginings of space; design and narrative of failures vis a vis architectural projects that are never built, and finally stressed that literature teaches us to acknowledge the importance of subjectivity in experience of space (multiplicity of place memory, nostalgia, affect key to understanding urban sites)
- *Ethnographic methods:* The group also discussed other and blended narrative methods like walk along interviews, oral narratives / orature, etc.; data visualization & digital humanities methods; artistic research practice; soundscaping the city, etc.
- *Power and literature connection:* The group discussed the literary not as just a liberatory practice but also one that is implicates in the existing structure of power, which in turn shape the material spaces we inhabit (hence the literary approach to space should be applied with nuance and caution). In that manner we discussed about *Principles of participatory urban research* and agreed that the work must be inclusive and committed to reciprocity
- *Archiving the city:* Based on our site-specific experience we discussed the challenges of heritage collection (how we collect, archive, and disseminate grassroots narratives, and who gets to tell narratives of the city)

In regard of sites-specific studies locations, we also speculated that site-specific research along these themes (rather than focus only on geospatial locations):

- Heritage and futurescaping
- Reading / narrating space at different scales and subjectivities
- Traumatic city (border violence, conflict, partition)
- Technology, biotechnology, and the city

Ambitions WG4 for year 1:

Listing participating cities for case studies
WG meeting with WG3 methodology
Seminar
STSM
Training school

b. Management of the COST Action

After an introduction on the tasks of the Management Committee for managing COST Actions, the participants divided into groups to discuss and make proposals for different management aspects:

1. Manage requests to join the Action
2. Decide who to invite and reimburse for Action meetings
3. Implementing STSMs
4. Communication Strategy
5. *Plan your first Grant Period (not covered)*
6. Implementing ITC Conference Grants
7. International Cooperation
8. Organising Training Schools
9. Stakeholder engagement

The results can be found in Annex 5.

The Management Committee will develop further the ideas into internal rules and procedures of the COST Action.

6) Decisions by the Management Committee

a. Election of the Chair and Vice-chair

Decision 1: Klaske Havik (NL) was elected Chair

Decision 2: Susana Oliveira (PT) was elected Vice Chair

b. Selection of the Grant Holder (Scientific Representative) and agreement of FSAC

Decision 3: The MC selected Delft University of Technology (NL) as Grant Holder Institution, represented at the MC by the elected Chair. Upon request of the elected Chair, the MC agreed to award the maximum FSAC rate of 15% of the total Scientific Expenditure.

c. Establishment of Action Management Structure

Decision 4: The following MC members were elected to the leadership positions:

- WG1: Jorge Mejia Hernandez (Vice Leader Tadeja Zupancic)
- WG2: Svava Riesto (Vice Leader Henriette Steiner, Matthew Skjonsberg)
- WG3: Lorin Niculae (Vice Leader Mark Proosten)
- WG4: Luis Santiago Baptista (Vice Leader Slobodan Veleviski)
- Science Communication Manager: Jorge Mejia Hernandez (also WG1 leader)
- STSM Coordinator: Kinga Kimic
- ITC Conference Grant Coordinator: Marcel Pikhart

Decision 5: The MC decided that the colleagues in the key leadership positions mentioned above (+ vice leaders of WGs – if needed) will form the Core Group. Specific mandates to the core group still have to be discussed by the MC.

7) International Participation

NA

8) Further decisions

The MC recognizes the need for the working groups to work closely together. Of each working group meeting, the minutes should be shared with the other groups, so that the WG's can inform each other. Therefore, when possible, WG meetings will be combined.

9) Next meetings and Closing

The MC agreed in principle about the following meetings:

1 Brussels (Belgium) May 22, 2019

Core group (WG leaders) Draft general framework of the action

WG2: Set up a theoretical framework including multiple disciplines, connecting the notion of narrative to meaningfulness, appropriation and integration.

Related event: Texts~Buildings seminar *Choices and Strategies of Spatial Imagination*, Brussels May 21, 2019.

2 Belgrade (Serbia), July 2019 (first week of July, date tbc)

WG 1 Framework for communication: strategy for the science communication of the Action; plan for a website; publication strategy for academic journal issues in year 1.

WG 3 Draft Methodological framework: Draft an inventory of narrative methods to understand the perception, use and appreciation of urban places in European cities. Explore new strategies, scenarios and guidelines. Preview of key methods

Related event: *Writingplace* journal presentation

3 Delft (Netherlands), Oct 17, 2019

MC meeting

All working groups 1/2/3/4

Discuss Theoretical & Methodological framework, List of proposed case studies, Communication

Related event: seminar "Affordances, affect, and politics in the design of architectural heritage", Oct 18, TU Delft

4 Almada (Portugal), Nov 2019 (2nd part of Nov, date tbc)

WG 3 Methodologies for case studies

WG 4 Presentations of case studies, in relation to theoretical and methodological framework

First overview of case studies; identify ongoing studies on writing urban place in the participating countries, check relation to the action goals, check geographical spread, ict countries; identify stakeholders. Discuss methods to approach case studies, set up plan for comparative analysis.

Related event: Seminar / workshop, exhibition Almada

5 Limerick (Ireland) Dec 11, 2019

WG 2 Refining theoretical-methodological framework

WG 3 Refining theoretical-methodological framework

Related event: (Un)Fair Cities. Equity, Ideology and Utopia in Urban Texts, University of Limerick, 12-13 December 2019, Association for Literary Urban Studies / Ralahine Centre for Utopian Studies

6 Tallinn (Estonia) Feb 2020 (date tbc)

PhD Training school

WG 2 Connect theoretical framework including multiple disciplines, connecting the notion of narrative to meaningfulness, appropriation and integration, to case studies

WG4: Collect ongoing work related to the case studies; Define work plan for the comparative analysis of case studies.

Closing: The hosting team gave some final words about the COST Action. The participants expressed their individual follow up actions for the success of the Action.

The MC Chair thanked the participation of all the MC members and closed the meeting with an inspirational thought.

10) List of Annexes

- Annex 1 - Agenda
- Annex 2- Presentation from COST Association and Main Proposer/Elected Chair (attached)
- Annex 3 –A Quick Guide to the COST Networking tools (attached)
- Annex 4 - A Quick Guide to the Tasks and Decision of the Management Committee (attached)
- Annex 5 – How to Manage a COST Action (attached)
- Annex 6 – Participant list

Minutes prepared by:

- *Action Science Officer*
- *Action Chair*
- *Action Vice Chair*

ANNEX 1- AGENDA

- Welcome by the hosting team
- COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy
- Tour de table: What am I looking for in this COST Action?
- Presentation of the COST Action by the Main Proposer: Challenge and MoU Objectives, Deliverables, General Action Structure (WGs, Horizontal Tasks, management...), SC recommendations
- Discussion on the MoU (Open Space): Working Groups tasks and deliverables
- Presentation on How COST Actions Work
- Discussion on the use of COST networking tools for financing the Action activities
- Reimbursement Rules
- How to Manage COST Actions?
- Acceptance by the MC of Rules of Procedures for MC of COST Actions
- Election of Chair and Vice Chair; Selection of Grant Holder
- Action Structure and organises the election for the WG and task leaders
- Proposal for WBP for the next Period and Next meeting: date and place
- Final Messages from COST and checkout: What will you start tomorrow to contribute to the success of this Network?