

ESF-COST High-Level Conferences

within the framework of the ESF Research Conferences Scheme

The **ESF Research Conferences Scheme** provides the opportunity for leading scientists and younger researchers to meet for discussions on the most recent developments in their fields of research. It acts as a catalyst for creating new synergistic contacts throughout Europe and the rest of the world. It develops principally through the establishment of long-term partnerships between the ESF and national and international organisations, including universities. **ESF Research Conferences** are open to scientists world-wide, whether from academia or industry. The conferences may be single events, or series, usually with a biennial meeting focusing on specific aspects of the same general topic. They generally last for four or five days and up to 150 participants and invited speakers may attend. Chairs select participants from applications received as a result of publicising the conferences. A conference fee is charged to participants.

Conference Guidelines

European Science Foundation

<http://www.esf.org>

The **European Science Foundation (ESF)**, with its headquarters located in Strasbourg, France, provides a common platform for its Member Organisations in order to advance European research and to explore new directions for research at the European level. Through its activities, the ESF serves the needs of the European research community in a global context.

COST

<http://www.cost.esf.org/>

The mission of **COST** is to strengthen Europe in scientific and technical research through the support of European cooperation and interaction between European researchers. It aims to maximise European synergy and added value in non-competitive and pre-normative research. The funds provided by COST support the coordination costs of the research networks (Actions), while the research is funded nationally. COST is primarily funded from a specific part of the EU RTD Framework Programmes.

ESF-COST High-Level Conferences

ESF and COST have agreed to co-sponsor a series of Scientific Conferences, within the framework of the ESF Research Conferences Scheme. The Series are known as '**ESF-COST High Level Conferences**', and are at the highest scientific level with respect to topics and choice of participants. The Conferences bring together participants and experts in the areas chosen by ESF and COST to discuss topics that are of major importance to the scientific community in Europe.

ESF-COST High Level Conferences began in 2006 with a first joint conference on '*Inorganic Chemistry: Metal-Nucleic Acid Interactions*', Athens, 12-17 November (Chair: J. Reedijk, Leiden, NL). In 2008 two conferences are scheduled in Acquafredda di Maratea, near Sapri, Italy on '*Natural Products Chemistry, Biology and Medicine*', (Co-Chairs: K.C. Nicolaou, La Jolla, USA and D. Schinzer, Magdeburg, DE) and '*Systems Chemistry*' (Chair: G. von Kiedrowski, Bochum, DE). In 2009 and 2010, it is planned to organise three conferences each year.

Topics

The topics should be at the forefront of scientific research. '**ESF-COST High Level Conferences**' will concentrate on topics in of **strategic priority** to both ESF and COST and will be selected by mutual agreement, possibly after an Open Call (for topics in 2010).

Conference Proposals and Scientific Programme

COST and ESF will identify the topics and the Conference Chairs who will be invited to develop a proposal for the scientific programme of each conference and to determine the choice of the speakers. The Chairs will invite the speakers to take part in the conference. Conferences may be in series, with a second event the following year.

Venue and Date

A limited number of venues, each linked to a certain scientific disciplinary area, is being established in order to create a clear 'brand-name' for ESF Research Conferences, and a predictable relation for the scientific community. ESF-COST High-Level Conferences will take place at Hotel Villa del Mare, Acquafredda di Maratea in the Basilicata region of Italy. The nearest major airports are Naples and Rome. Participants travel by train to Sapri where group transportation is organised to meet arriving trains. The Conferences will be held outside the summer months of July and August. The typical duration of a Conference is 4-5 days. Participants will normally arrive on a Friday or Saturday afternoon, and depart on Wednesday or Thursday after breakfast.

Profile and Format of the Conferences

The core activities of the Conferences will be based on **lectures by invited scientists**, who are leaders in their respective fields, followed by **extensive discussion periods** e.g. 30-minute lecture followed by an extended discussion period. An informal exchange of ideas, both inside and outside the lecture room will be encouraged, and the number of sessions in the daily timetable will be limited in order to allow sufficient time for interaction between the participants. In addition to the 5-6 hours per day of lecture room activities, poster sessions, round-table discussions or discussion groups will be organised. Either one afternoon or extended lunch periods will be usually kept free of lectures in order to allow time for free time activities.

One evening should be reserved for a '**Forward Look Plenary Discussion**' about future developments in the field. The format of this discussion will be provided by ESF ¹.

In order to encourage speakers to present their latest results and ideas, which may not yet be fully explored and ripe for publication, no written papers will be requested. The publication, as proceedings, of selected papers prepared after the Conferences may be approved by ESF and COST, subject to the agreement of the speakers concerned.

Participants will take all their meals together to encourage further contact and networking, which will be particularly beneficial to **younger researchers** who may be less outspoken in the more formal lecture room setting. In order to gain optimum benefit from the Conference, both the speakers and the participants are expected to stay for the whole duration.

Poster Sessions

Poster sessions will be a very important feature of this series of conferences. Ideally, the venue for the poster session will be located close to the main meeting room and will be large and light enough to host such an event. Moreover, a **social event** may be incorporated into the meeting. The following factors should also be considered:

- each participant should give a one-slide presentation about the contents of his/her poster contribution at the beginning of the scheduled poster discussion sessions;
- sufficient time should be allowed for posters to be viewed, ideally throughout the entire meeting.

¹ (ESF's Forward Looks are the key to the development of strong links between the European scientific community and science policy makers. The purpose of a Forward Look is to define research agendas and priorities in a particular research domain and to communicate the results to research funders. The themes are selected on the basis of their importance to European research.. See <http://www.esf.org/flooks>).

Organisation

The **scientific** aspects of the meeting organisation (including any decisions on financial support for invited speakers and other participants) and the scientific quality of the conference are the responsibility of the Conference Chairs. Chairs may seek **additional sponsorship** from other sources: in this case, they should advise ESF which organisation(s) they intend to approach. All other organisational tasks and logistics will be the responsibility of the ESF Conferences Unit co-located with COST in Brussels, working in close co-operation with the venue, and an ESF or COST Conference Officer will be assigned to each Conference. His/her tasks will include coordinating the administrative arrangements at the venue, publicising the Conference, financial and budgetary matters, the processing of applications, communicating with participants and speakers, making payments and collecting fees. The ESF Conferences Unit co-located with COST will manage the organisation of the Conferences in a standardised, streamlined manner.

Grant

The Grant available for the Conference will normally be used to meet the expenses of the invited speakers and selected young scientists. Travel should be by rail or by economy air. Experience shows that it is often possible for speakers to obtain some of their travel costs from other sources, if the sponsor offers partial support. The co-sponsors will jointly provide a total grant of **EUR 40 000** per Conference. It is expected that participants (other than the speakers and selected young scientists) will pay their own travel and subsistence costs, and the registration fee.

Management of the Grant

The ESF Conferences Unit will manage the Grant. ESF will be responsible for all payments.

Registration Fee

A **registration fee**, in the order of EUR 250-300 will be levied, in order to cover the costs of organising and administering the Conference. This levy will be in addition to the subsistence costs. The Conference fees (subsistence + registration) will be all-inclusive i.e. full board and lodging, meeting facilities for the duration of the meeting, a social programme, and group bus transfers. All fees will be paid to ESF, and an online fee payment facility will be available.

Additional Sponsorship

The Conference will be advertised as "ESF-COST High-Level Conference on...". Additional sponsorship may be acknowledged in publicity material in terms such as "With major support from..." or "With additional sponsoring from...". If an external sponsor wishes to have its logo included in advertising material, the Chair should advise ESF accordingly. There should be no confidential information. Eventual IPR or copyrights are the property of all participants contributing intellectually to the Conference.

Publicity

ESF will publicise the Conference in appropriate scientific journals and on its **web site**. ESF will be responsible for the publicity for each Conference, and for disseminating information to potential applicants. COST Communications Unit may guarantee additional publicity for the conference.

The identity of a Conference will be promoted through a standardised, graphical presentation of all its documents, which will include the logos of ESF and COST. The Conference will be advertised to **appropriate individuals and laboratories**, to **ESF Member Organisations** and to a **network of scientists**. Whenever possible, individual advertisements and calendar entries will also be placed free-of-charge in the scientific press, and in other appropriate journals and newsletters, according to the associated science disciplines.

In addition, it is very important that Conference Chairs are prepared to provide a **comprehensive, substantial emailing list** for circulation of an advertisement. (Important: this list of email addresses must be in the form of either a Word or an Excel document with all addresses listed in **one** column only and with a single address **per** row).

As soon as it is agreed to go ahead with the Conference, the Chair will be expected to email the ESF Conferences Unit with the following documents in order to advertise the event:

- the **preliminary scientific programme**, including a paragraph about the scope of the Conference, the list of topics to be covered, the list of confirmed invited speakers with their affiliations and the titles of their lectures;
- the full address and email list of the **invited speakers**;
- a **comprehensive, geographically-balanced email list** of all potentially interested scientists;
- a **list of scientific journals** or reviews and their websites for publicity and free inserts in calendars of events
- An **image** (photo or diagram) to illustrate the programmes.

Applications to Attend the Conference and Deadlines for Application

An online **application facility** is available via the ESF Research Conferences website (<http://www.esf.org/conferences>). The deadline for applications is to be no later than 3 months before the event. The ESF Conferences Unit will process all applications and email them to the Chair for decision, together with each applicant's one-page abstract and list of publications.

Participation

The Chair will select participants from applications received as a result of ESF publicising the Conferences. The basic criteria for accepting participants will be their scientific merit and their scientific needs. Participants, including speakers, may be accepted from any country, although there should normally be a high proportion of Europeans. Without compromising scientific standards, organisers should aim for a wide geographical representation of scientists, with a recommended ratio of **about two-thirds European participation to one-third non-European**. Special attention should also be paid to the involvement of **younger applicants** and those from **developing countries**, and over-representation of scientists from the host country should be avoided. Moreover, the gender balance should be taken into consideration. ESF Research Conferences are expected to be large conferences of up to 150 participants. ESF will ensure that the conference takes place as scheduled when the attendance is larger than 80 participants.

Final Selection, Programmes & Invitations

The Chair should decide on the participation within **3 weeks** of receiving the applications. At this stage he/she should finalise the scientific programme and email it to ESF, together with the list of participants and the allocation of financial support. An invitation, the Final Programme and Practical Information Guide will be emailed to each invited speaker and participant. The Programme and Practical Information will also be available on the ESF Research Conferences website.

Book of Abstracts

If the conference budget allows for it, a **Book of Abstracts gathering** lecture abstracts and/or (extended) abstracts for posters will be distributed to the participants.

On-site Administrative Arrangements

The ESF Conferences Unit will finalise all on-site administrative arrangements with the conference venue. A **Conference Officer** from ESF or COST will be present for the duration of the Conference to take care of registration, any travel payments and to oversee the local administrative organisation. In particular, an ESF Conference Officer will take responsibility for the reception of speakers. The Chair is encouraged to provide an **assistant or young researcher** to be responsible for the organisation of the poster sessions and/or other on-site scientific aspects.

Questionnaires

Participants will be required to complete a **questionnaire** on various aspects of the Conference. The completed questionnaires should be returned to the on-site secretariat during the event.

Report on the Conference

The Chair is expected to write a **conference report**, as it is a condition of sponsorship that a scientific report be submitted after every Conference. The **conference report** should have the following format:

1. An **introduction** (up to two pages) on the topic in non-specialist terms (especially for highly technical subjects);
2. **Scientific content** of the conference:
 - a. a summary of the conference sessions focusing on the scientific highlights
 - b. an assessment of the results and their potential impact on future research or applications
3. **'Forward Look'²Plenary Discussion'**:
 - a. State-of-the-art in the field;
 - b. Emerging topics;
 - c. Visions for the future of the research field – identification of issues in the 5-10 years+ timeframe;
 - d. Is there a need for a foresight-type initiative?
4. The **reaction of the participants** to the location and the organisation, including networking, and any other relevant comments.

The reports should be sent to ESF **no later than six weeks** after the end of the Conference. The reports will be forwarded to the appropriate ESF Standing Committees and Expert Committees for approval and consideration in their science policy discussions and also to ESF's Partners in the ESF Research Conferences Scheme. The **Report** will be posted on a '**Conference Highlights**' page within the ESF Research Conferences website (subject to the explicit authorisation of the Author(s)).

Enquiries and Further Information

For all enquiries and/or for further information concerning the Conference, please contact conferences@esf.org.

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² See <http://www.esf.org/flooks>