



**European Cooperation  
in Science and Technology  
- COST -**

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**Brussels, 8 December 2011**

**Secretariat**

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**COST 4178/11**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

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Subject : Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of a European Concerted Research Action designated as COST Action IS1106: Offender Supervision in Europe

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Delegations will find attached the Memorandum of Understanding for COST Action as approved by the COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) at its 183rd meeting on 30 November 2011

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**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**For the implementation of a European Concerted Research Action designated as**  
**COST Action IS1106**  
**OFFENDER SUPERVISION IN EUROPE**

The Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding, declaring their common intention to participate in the concerted Action referred to above and described in the technical Annex to the Memorandum, have reached the following understanding:

1. The Action will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of document COST 4154/11 “Rules and Procedures for Implementing COST Actions”, or in any new document amending or replacing it, the contents of which the Parties are fully aware of.
2. The main objective of the Action is to exchange, increase and deepen knowledge about offender supervision in Europe, in order to understand its development in social context, how it is constructed and experienced by those involved and its impacts and consequences.
3. 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 64 million in 2011 prices.
4. The Memorandum of Understanding will take effect on being accepted by at least five Parties.
5. The Memorandum of Understanding will remain in force for a period of 4 years, calculated from the date of the first meeting of the Management Committee, unless the duration of the Action is modified according to the provisions of Chapter V of the document referred to in Point 1 above.

## A. ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS

Offender supervision in Europe has developed rapidly in scale, distribution and intensity in recent years. However, the emergence of ‘mass supervision’ (i.e. in the community) has largely escaped the attention of legal scholars and social scientists more concerned with the ‘mass incarceration’ reflected in prison growth. As well as representing an important analytical lacuna for penology in general and comparative criminal justice in particular, the neglect of supervision means that research has not delivered the knowledge that is urgently required to engage with political, policy and practice communities grappling with delivering justice efficiently and effectively in fiscally straitened times, and with the challenges of communicating the meaning, legitimacy and utility of supervision to an insecure public. This Action aims to remedy these problems by facilitating cooperation between institutions and individuals in different European states (and with different disciplinary perspectives) who are already carrying out research on offender supervision or, in the case of early stage researchers, are attracted to that field. It will review and synthesize existing knowledge and then enrich it through interdisciplinary and comparative work and capacity building. The Action will thus provide a European forum on offender supervision for academics, policy makers, practitioners and interested citizens.

**Keywords:** Offender supervision, probation, parole, community sanctions and measures, comparative criminal justice

## B. BACKGROUND

### B.1 General background

The **numbers of offenders under supervision in the community** have **grown rapidly** in recent decades. In most jurisdictions, offenders under supervision (whether as an alternative to prosecution or sentence, as a community sentence in its own right, or as part of a post-custody licence) **heavily outnumber those detained in custody**. To give two examples, in Germany in 2008 the prison population was around 73,000 whereas almost 225,000 persons were under some form of supervision (Federal Statistics Office, 2011); in June 2010 in England & Wales the prison population was 83,500 whilst the population of offenders under statutory supervision in the community was 241,500 (Ministry of Justice 2010).

Offender supervision (hereafter OS) has also developed swiftly in Central and Eastern Europe where nascent probation systems have been a part of post-Soviet era criminal justice reforms. Besides its increasing scale and reach, the **intensity of OS** has also developed considerably in recent decades, moving beyond traditionally rehabilitative measures to include unpaid work, medical, psychological or substance misuse treatment, mandatory drug or alcohol testing, exclusion orders and residence conditions, curfews, house arrest and electronic monitoring as well as other innovations. Under criminal law, the use of OS before trial or sentence is increasing, but OS has also emerged under civil law (e.g. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders) and in administrative forms (e.g. under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements). New forms of supervision directed at foreign nationals, migrants and refugees have also emerged.

One **driver** of this expansion and adaptation, at least in some jurisdictions, is increasingly **political and public concern over the costs of imprisonment and of reoffending** (i.e. offending during or after criminal sanctions). A recent policy paper in the UK estimates that the 'vicious cycle' of reoffending by ex-prisoners costs the UK economy between £7-10 billion per year (Ministry of Justice 2011). The potential role of OS in reducing these costs has become a key interest of contemporary penal policy; particularly in relation to using OS to displace shorter custodial sentences which have higher costs per day and are typically associated with high reconviction rates. To give one example of the possible savings: in the Netherlands, the notional cost of a 2 month prison sentence is between 10,800 and 24,000 EUR while the **total costs** of community sanctions that can substitute for such a sentence range between 600 and 2000 EUR. Some argue (somewhat more controversially) that, as well as being much **less expensive than imprisonment**, OS can produce **lower reoffending rates**. Critically examining the case for using OS as a potentially more efficient and effective form of sanctioning is therefore one of the 'real current problems' this Action seeks to address.

This remarkable expansion and adaptation should have ensured that OS became a key focus of **contemporary research**. Instead, from the 1980s onwards it is ‘mass incarceration’ that has preoccupied scholars, unwittingly allowing the **neglect** of the parallel **development of ‘mass supervision’**. Thus, research has failed to deliver the body of knowledge that is now urgently required to engage with political, policy and practice communities grappling with the challenges of delivering justice efficiently and effectively in fiscally straitened times – and with the challenges of communicating the meaning, nature, legitimacy and utility of OS to an insecure public. These are the key scientific and practical issues that the Action aims to tackle.

**COST** is the best mechanism for doing so precisely because its **networking and capacity-building** activities represent the optimal way to **capitalize on the developing national scholarship on OS in a range of member states, and on the emergence of interest in the comparative study of OS** (and of criminal justice more generally). Despite evidence of some recent capacity development in this area, this Action will rapidly advance the comparative study of OS in Europe and lay the foundations for future empirical and scholarly work in this neglected area, producing a step-change in the scale, depth and quality of research.

## **B.2 Current state of knowledge**

The **vast majority of the extant literature on OS in Europe is descriptive or evaluative and confined to the analysis of OS in single jurisdictions**. Despite a small body of literature, largely inspired by Foucault’s seminal work *Discipline and Punish* (1975/77), which has centred on the ways in which OS has adapted since the collapse of the ‘rehabilitative ideal’ in many western jurisdictions, and some ‘normative’ literature (especially in Germany) addressing the legal and constitutional requirements of forms of OS, OS remains relatively under-theorized as well as under-researched in comparative perspective.

In recent years the **most prominent strand of research** in the OS field has addressed the effectiveness of specific forms of OS. This has been a particular preoccupation in Anglophone jurisdictions, although it has also been influential in the Nordic and the Low countries. Under the general banner of ‘**What Works?**’, much of this research has been sponsored by national governments (e.g. the Home Office in England & Wales) and limited to the evaluation of programmes which are only accessed by a minority of offenders subject to OS in national offender populations. This body of evidence (and the practice models it commends) has been the subject of some important recent work at the European level (discussed in B.4). However, even within this body of scholarship, it is increasingly recognized that **such evaluative work needs to move beyond a focus on special programmes** and toward an examination of routine practices of supervision understood in social context (McNeill et al., 2010) if significant improvements in reoffending outcomes are to be delivered. Critical scholars have highlighted the need to attend to the risks associated with ‘policy transfer’ around ‘What Works?’: specifically the transfer of programmes which may be effective in one context, to others with different penal cultures and offender populations.

The **innovative** aspect of this Action rests in its aim to **synthesize existing knowledge and generate new knowledge about OS as a set of situated social practices** which can and must be analyzed in comparative context, taking into account how they are differently experienced, practiced and constituted in different places -- and to what effect. Although scholars of OS have begun to take **important first steps towards comparative work** (e.g. Dünkel/Spieß, 1983; Hamai et al., 1995; Van Kalmthout & Durnescu, 2008), existing publications (in the form of edited collections) have tended to rely principally on single nation descriptive accounts of OS and to emphasize policy rather than practice or theoretical issues, with limited comparative analyses provided. At the same time, the Action will also address **significant gaps in the existing literature on comparative penology** itself (e.g. Rusche & Kirchheimer, 1939; van Kalmthout & Tak, 1988; Downes, 1988; Cavadino & Dignan, 2006; Dünkel et al. 2010; Lappi-Seppälä, 2011), which has tended to privilege the analysis of imprisonment rates/regimes and macro-level explanations for jurisdictional variations. Valuable though this work is, it is increasingly recognized that deeper and richer understandings of penal cultures and practices are required to make sense of differences in approaches to punishment (Nelken, 2010), and that OS (and not just prison rates and regimes) must be a part of such analyses.

### **B.3 Reasons for the Action**

At an **international level**, OS began to emerge as an **important topic in the early 1990s** when the **United Nations and the Council of Europe** tried to strengthen OS to reduce the use of imprisonment but also tried to establish minimum standards for OS to ensure that human rights are respected. Both organizations involved national stakeholders as well as NGOs and scientific experts in the preparations of suitable documents to support these goals. Nevertheless, the ‘United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-Custodial Sanctions and Measures [Tokyo Rules]’ from 1990 and the Council Europe’s ‘European Rules on Community Sanctions and Measures’ from 1992 - neither of which is binding on Member States - gained little attention in the Member States.

In the following years, in particular after 2001, other topics such as the fight against organized crime, terrorism or corruption became priorities on the international agenda. In the **EU**, where criminal policy remains within the competence of the Member States, **'mutual trust based on mutual understanding'** is of key importance for efficient cooperation in that field- this was recently affirmed in the **'Stockholm programme'** that sets policy priorities in the area of justice, freedom and security, [Official Journal C 115 of 4.5.2010]). A **Framework Decision** adopted by the EU in 2008 on **'supervision of probation measures and alternative sanctions'** (OJ L 337/102 of 16.12.2008) will require Member States to supervise offenders sentenced in another state and thus to implement 'foreign' supervision orders. Mutual understanding based on mutual knowledge of such orders and practices will therefore be of utmost importance in managing such transfers. But recent seminars that have brought together practitioners, scholars and policy makers reveal that this understanding is still lacking, partly because of the limitations in academic study of this field alluded to above. The discussions about implementing the Framework Decision also reveal that as well as knowledge of other systems and practices, a shared canon of values is required. Just recently, the Council of Europe adopted the 'Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)1 on the Council of Europe Probation Rules' - thus, OS is firmly (back) on the European agenda, creating the **pressing need for support and critique by the European scientific community**.

Section B.2 alluded to the limitations in OS research, to the risks associated with policy transfer and to the benefits of a richer and more developed comparative penology. The development of a network of OS researchers and practitioners in Europe – at all career stages – will provide a platform for sharing existing academic and practice-based knowledge; building comparative analytical frameworks and other inter-disciplinary methodological innovations; supporting collaborative research activity (across jurisdictions and disciplines), building research capacity; developing the skills of young researchers; thus creating new insights, theories and perspectives about OS in Europe. It will enable social science to contribute more effectively to developing and exchanging new knowledge about OS so as to better support the development of justice and security in Europe, by making a lasting contribution to science, public policy and practice, and public debate.

Objectives, outcomes and mechanisms are further elaborated in sections C, D and E.

#### **B.4 Complementarity with other research programmes**

This Action will provide a platform to bring together the findings of several recent and/or ongoing transnational projects, and to identify and highlight the gaps in the knowledge base. Strengthening Transnational Approaches to Reducing Re-offending (**STARR**) and Developing Offender Management in Corrections in Europe (**DOMICE**) are examples of recent or ongoing EU programmes to improve the understanding of what works in reducing re-offending in the EU. Developing a Methodology to Collect Data on Community Sanctions and Measures and Attrition Rates in Europe (**DECODEUR**), also EU funded, adds to the existing European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics data on the ways and extent to which community sanctions and measures are imposed and executed in EU jurisdictions. Implementation Support for Transfer of European Probation Sentences (**ISTEP**) seeks to improve mutual knowledge and understanding of probation sentences and measures within the EU, and to support the implementation of EU Framework Decision 2008/947/JHA on the mutual recognition of probation. The Action will also take account of projects in neighbouring fields. These include the COST Action IS0807 **Living in Surveillance Societies** and **Restorative Justice and Mediation in Penal Matters**, which is funded under the EU Criminal Justice Programme.



Despite their undoubtedly valuable contributions, by virtue of their necessarily more specific foci, none of these extant programmes is able to generate the **step change in the quality of and capacity for OS research** that is the primary rationale for this Action.

## **C. OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS**

### **C.1 Main/primary objectives**

The main objective of the Action is to exchange, increase and deepen knowledge about offender supervision in Europe, in order to better understand its evolution and development in social context; how it is experienced by those subject to it; how it is constituted and constructed by those that practice it; and what its impacts and consequences are for all of those affected by it.

### **C.2 Secondary objectives**

The specific objectives of the Action include:

- (1) **Advancing the state of the art in this neglected area:** The Action will consolidate knowledge of the ways in which OS are experienced, practised and constructed (legally, socially, politically, culturally) across Europe, and generate new insights through comparative analyses which move through but beyond local contexts and particular methodological preferences or disciplinary perspectives. The contribution to knowledge includes fundamental new theoretical research as well as the development of new methodologies for empirical research which will generate new interdisciplinary comparative European perspectives on contemporary OS. This objective will be delivered through the instruments and concerted activity of the Action, the creation of a trans-European network of OS researchers, and achieved through the exchange of ideas, collaborative research and the dissemination of academic output.

- (2) **Advancing the utility of related research for European policymakers and practitioners:** The Action will encourage the development of ‘best practice’ in the allocation and use of OS. Policymakers and practitioners will inform the development of the Action from outset (the European Probation Organisation CEP is a key partner and will be represented in the Management Committee). Therefore, as the activities yields insights and findings from cross-national and comparative analyses of OS, policy and practice relevant conclusions will be swiftly identified and disseminated. Relationships between academic and policy/practitioner communities will be strengthened through the involvement of policymakers and practitioners in workshops and conferences, and the working groups will produce materials targeted to these audiences (e.g. briefings, online resources, podcasts, etc.). Through the participation of professionals charged with educating and training OS practitioners the Action will improve training and workforce development across Europe.
- (3) **Advancing public awareness of OS and research on OS:** The Action will ensure better foundations for a more informed public debate in this area, and foster greater understanding about the desirability, necessity, experiences and limitations of OS and the types and levels of OS considered appropriate, legitimate and credible by citizens. This will be delivered through the dissemination of materials (principally online resources) designed specifically for this target audience, and through engagement with appropriate news media.
- (4) **Building OS research capacity:** The Action provides a platform for researchers in OS to share experiences, further future OS research and inform public policy and debate. The Action will create synergies beyond existing research centres, networks and conferences, and will provide essential leverage for future major collaborative research grant applications, as well as developing the theoretical and methodological expertise of researchers participating in the Action. This objective will be achieved though the involvement of researchers in collaborative research realized through the concerted instruments of the Action.

- (5) **Developing the skills and networks of young researchers:** The Action will provide opportunities for Early-Stage Researchers to gain valuable experience in a large international comparative research programme. This will be achieved by implementing activities explicitly geared towards young and Early Stage Researchers, including a Training School, Short-Term Scientific Missions, in a Think Tank, and by involving young researchers in managerial aspects of the Action. Additionally, the Action aims to strengthen the methodological skills and theoretical knowledge of early stage researchers (and more established academics) through all of the Actions activities and exchanges, including by fostering joint publication opportunities involving more established and early stage researchers in working together.

### **C.3 How will the objectives be achieved?**

The Action will deliver the following core outcomes: regular meetings across Europe to share expertise and develop other deliverables (including COST supported Working Groups workshops and conference meetings); the support and active development of the European Society of Criminology's Working Group on Community Sanctions (see Part IIB), which will exist beyond the Action and provide a continuing platform for research collaboration, consultancy and policy advice; a scientific work programme around key OS themes, involving integrated collaborative research programmes and activities; dissemination through seminar and conference presentations with academic, practitioner and public policy communities; and dissemination through "OS briefings", a website, podcasts, blogs and social network media, news media coverage, published books, peer-reviewed journal articles and special issues, reports, manuals, and other published output.

To adequately support core academic and dissemination activities and to maximize their impact, close cooperation with the related policy and practice communities is crucial. The Action will therefore require the appointment of specialized (preferably multi-lingual) **knowledge exchange staff** (based at the institution of the Action Chair, funded through the budget for financial and scientific coordination and support). Besides performing key administrative tasks, this worker or workers, will support the Action Chair in the coordinated management of relationships with policy and practice partners (principally via CEP; the development and maintenance of the Action's website; collaboration with the Management Committee and the Working Groups to produce the non-academic outputs (e.g. newsletters, podcasts, posts on social networking media, etc.) discussed above.

#### **C.4 Benefits of the Action**

The Action will have wide-ranging and far-reaching benefits. By resourcing and developing a network of OS researchers, the Action will provide a platform for future collaborative research activity and the creation of new insights, theories and perspectives about the experience, practice, construction and impacts of OS. Specifically, the Action will deliver the following benefits: consolidated knowledge, new insights and theoretical perspectives, trans-European multi-disciplinary comparative research, academic synergies and collaborative research, enhanced research capacity, the development of young researchers, greater and better informed awareness of OS across society, recommendations for best practice, and better informed public policy. In sum, the Action will provide for a **deeper understanding and greater awareness of OS** across Europe, which **will inform and improve penal policy and its interfaces with its public audiences**.

## C.5 Target groups/end users

The results of the Action will be beneficial for numerous stakeholders and end users. National **Ministries of Justice** have a keen interest in findings about the impact of OS across Europe, as they seek to deliver justice and public safety within tight spending constraints. **European Probation services and organizations** (and their umbrella body, the CEP) will be similarly interested in their own impacts, but also in richer analyses of how those they supervise experience supervision and how their staff implement it. The findings are likely to have significant implications for the training and professional development of staff involved in OS, and so **educators and trainers** will also be important end users. Other non-state OS providers (in the private and voluntary sectors) will also be keenly interested in the Action and its outputs, particularly as they relate to the design and commissioning of such services.

**NGOs, think tanks, penal reform groups** and others will have similar interests in the Action and its outputs and in their consequences for public debates about crime and justice. In this respect, **media and public interest** in justice is also significant, though not always well informed, and the Action will aim to address this in relation to OS.

The **EU** (through its Stockholm programme) is increasingly concerned with the harmonization of justice (reflected in the recently implemented Framework Decision on the transfer of probation supervision). The **Council of Europe** has a long-standing interest in criminal justice systems and practices (e.g. 'Probation Rules' and other Recommendations).

**CEP** has been consulted about the development of this proposal; the proposer's (and the proposed management committee members') frequent and well established engagements with these end users have also informed its development.

## **D. SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME**

### **D.1 Scientific focus**

The scientific programme will be designed to deliver the Action's aim and objectives through the cumulative effect of the coordinated programme. As noted above, the intent is to remedy the neglect of a critically important aspect of justice systems – offender supervision in the community – which has been under-explored and under-analyzed, undermining the contribution of science to the betterment of policy and practice in an area of pressing political and public concern.

To that end, the **scientific programme** needs to be **structured**, but **open and flexible** enough to **accommodate multiple disciplines and perspectives**, including those not yet involved. For example, the Action will engage not just criminologists and socio-legal scholars and immediately cognate disciplines (social work, social policy, sociology and anthropology), but also, economists, historians, philosophers, psychiatrists, psychologists and others. The overarching focus of the Action is enhancing knowledge about OS in contemporary European societies, and for the purpose of the Scientific Programme, this broad subject area is broken down into **three intellectual thematic domains**: (1) **experiencing offender supervision**; (2) **practicing offender supervision**; (3) **contextualizing offender supervision**. Each represents an important knowledge area where research is already being undertaken but where the benefits of collaborative international research must now be developed and utilized. Each also reflects traditional distinctions between studying institutions of punishment as (1) lived realities; as (2) professional cultures and practices; or as (3) shaped by their broader social and political contexts.

The intellectual development of each thematic field will involve sequentially sharing existing ideas and knowledge, developing common shared theoretical frameworks and methodologies, collecting new data, and analyzing, presenting and disseminating research findings. Each thematic area will address a range of important issues and questions analyzed at the national level and comparatively across Europe, thereby allowing for a better understanding of how and why different experiences, practices and forms of OS are deployed in different countries and embedded in the social norms and structures in each country, and consequently how these developments are leading to multiple and varied forms of justice.

The three themes are further elaborated as follows:

- (1) **Experiencing OS:** This domain is concerned with the lived experience of OS by those subject to it and those affected by it. This includes not only offenders, but also their families, the victims of crime, and communities affected by crime – communities that are the putative beneficiaries of offender supervision. The Action’s focus on lived experience is crucial to understanding not just the ‘official’ purposes and processes of a wide variety of different forms of OS (including for example, those involving electronic monitoring), but also how supervision is perceived and received by its various stakeholders. In particular, the Action will examine how OS is experienced differently by diverse groups, whether as offenders, victims or communities (e.g. foreign nationals, ethnic or religious minorities, women, children and young people, those with mental health problems, and others who may be subject to discrimination and oppression). Assessing the (differential) impacts of OS will be a key concern in this domain.
  
- (2) **Practising OS:** This domain is concerned with the construction and constitution of OS by those concerned in its delivery. Thus, the Action will examine perspectives on and evidence about relevant professional and para-professional groups, including judges, social workers, probation officers, police officers, and those working in other related service providers (public, private and not-for-profit). The Action will also draw upon ethnographic studies of how these actors are formally trained and supervised, and how they shape and are shaped by informal working cultures and practices. Consideration will also be given to the role of new technologies of and for practice (for example, risk assessment and offender classification tools). In so doing, the Action will provide a richer, ‘thicker’, more nuanced descriptive account of how OS is practiced in the participating jurisdictions. The Action will examine how issues of gender, ethnicity and other dimensions of difference affect the interactions and relationships between supervisors and supervised, as well as how the relationships between different professional actors affect decision making about and implementation of OS.

- (3) **Contextualizing OS:** This domain is concerned with how the wider social, legal, economic, historical, political, cultural (and cross-cultural), organisational and community level contexts of OS influence its constitution and development. Rather than being concerned with the internal dynamics of practice, this domain explores the influence of external factors on OS services and practitioners. Thus, for example, it will examine the impact of broader developments associated with late-modernity, including questions around risk, marketization, de-regulation, privatization, managerialism, punitiveness, technological development, etc. As well as exploring these and other aspects of context at the national level, the Action will also explore the significance of transnational and international (particularly European) influences and instruments in the regulation and constitution of OS. Human rights instruments and the related jurisprudence are of particular importance in this regard. Questions of policy transfer within and beyond the European Union – particularly via twinning arrangements between more and less developed OS systems and institutions – will also be a key focus in this domain.

## **D.2 Scientific work plan methods and means**

The scientific focus of the Action, explored through the three interrelated intellectual domains, is developed through a scientific work plan involving the coordinated research activity and the cumulative effects of research collaboration and knowledge generation. Each of the three intellectual domains identified will be represented by a Working Group, within which participating academics will coordinate their externally funded research activities on the basis of the following broad research framework. This framework involves a series of sequential stages through which knowledge is consolidated, created and disseminated. Broadly speaking, each stage corresponds with a yearly cycle of the Action, though some phases may require longer than others. The processes described here are intentionally flexible and broad so as to accommodate multiple theoretical perspectives, researchers and research programmes, as well as providing scope for the researchers in the Action to shape theoretical and methodological developments from within the Action.



### **Research Framework: Phase 1 – Descriptive and evaluative work**

Each working group will review existing knowledge in its field of interest so as to (1) assess the extent of research evidence and scholarship about OS (2) identify methodological limitations in the existing research and (3) identify substantive gaps in knowledge. This phase will therefore provide a **mapping of current understanding of the nature of OS** as experienced, as practiced, in different jurisdictional contexts, as well as a detailed exploration of relevant datasets about and methodologies deployed in this field and their strengths and limitations. This phase will include reviewing available evidence about the impact and outcomes of OS for those subject to them, and for those who are their putative beneficiaries (for example, families, victims, communities, and the state). This first phase will allow Working Groups to devise individual work plans and for participants to start to build collaborative relationships to address the gaps and deficits they have identified.

### **Research Framework: Phase 2 – Developing comparative work**

In this phase, each group will develop new multi-disciplinary and comparative methodological approaches; and apply these approaches (either to secondary data analysis, conceptual work or ongoing or new empirical projects) in order to generate new knowledge and new analyses of OS. This phase will also explore how policies, practices and people have ‘transferred’ between jurisdictions. To this end, the development of shared understanding of key concepts and terms which are often interpreted in different ways (for example, ‘probation’, ‘rehabilitation’, ‘welfare’) will be a key task for the Action.

The second stage of the scientific work plan also builds on the first stage by **developing new analytical frameworks and methodologies** that can be used as a basis for further knowledge creation and refinement. This will allow researchers to surpass existing methods and datasets and to build more appropriate comparative research strategies and methodologies. As well as developing new methods, this stage will also require the development of **overarching theoretical frameworks, concepts and models**. Ultimately, this stage will deliver concerted action to produce new comparative research, new methodological approaches and new strategies for knowledge creation.

### **Research Framework: Phase 3: Progressing comparative work**

Phase 3 involves conducting joint and comparative data collection which is complementary with existing knowledge and the scientific focus and objectives of the Action. This will take the form of **new empirical work and/or new analyses and comparisons of existing research**. During this stage, researchers will utilize the models, frameworks and methodologies previously developed, and thereby start to **create additional new knowledge**. A range of quantitative and qualitative empirical methods will be deployed. In the domain of experiencing supervision (thematic 1) research may be conducted in the form of offender perception surveys, interviews or focus groups, content and discourse analysis, as well as desk based research. For the practice domain (thematic 2), empirical research may take the form of surveys, semi-structured interviews with practitioners, desk based research and analysis of documents and case records. In the contextual domain (thematic 3) empirical research may include key stakeholder interviews with policymakers, analysis of media reporting of OS, desk based research and statistical data analysis. In this stage, the cumulative process of knowledge generation will involve the assessment of existing, comparative and new knowledge. This stage will also involve initial assessments and discussions of emerging research findings.

#### **Research Framework: Phase 4 – Prescriptive and normative work**

The final phase is concerned with the **analysis and dissemination** of findings, although the Action will seek to engage continuously and progressively with stakeholders and end users throughout its duration, and not only in its final phase. Working with these non-academic constituencies and colleagues, the Action will, in the light of the earlier phases, engage with ethical, evidential and legal arguments about the rights and wrongs of OS as practices of criminal justice, and how they *should* develop, in relation to questions of justice and fairness, and in relation to questions of effective and efficient crime control.

Phase 4 will also involve an overall **synthesis of joint research results from the empirical, theoretical and methodological perspectives developed during the course of the Action**. An important part of this stage will be to present both consolidated and new knowledge in a wide variety of formats suitable for the multiple constituencies of the Action, including academic and non-academic outputs. In this stage, researchers will be required to reflect on progress made in terms of the contribution to science, to **better informed public debate** and to the **development of policy and practice**. By this stage researchers will have engaged in a collaborative comparative research process and will have established a sustainable platform and intellectual basis for research far beyond the COST Action.

## **E. ORGANISATION**

### **E.1 Coordination and organisation**

The Action brings together researchers studying various aspects of offender supervision in the community. Individual research efforts funded by participating institutions and funding agencies will be coordinated and concerted through the Action via the establishment of **four open scientific Working Groups (WG)** supervised and coordinated by a **Management Committee (MC)** in accordance with the usual COST structure.

The MC will be responsible for the overall coordination of the Action. As well as representing the countries involved, the MC will comprise of the Chair, Vice-chair, Working Group Leaders, a Short Term Scientific Mission coordinator, a Training School coordinator, a representative of the participating Early Stage Researchers, and the Chief Executive of CEP, the European Probation Organisation, to assist throughout with policy and practice engagement. The MC will also be responsible for reviewing progress of the Action, for producing and commissioning progress reports and for formulating overall recommendations. To this end, the WG Leaders and other members of the MC will formulate a work plan to ensure that the goals of the Scientific Programme are realized. The Scientific Programme will be flexible enough to allow it to evolve as research progresses and additional COST countries join the Action.

The scheduling and locations for MC and WG meetings and conferences will ensure opportunities for exchange between the WGs, a geographical balance between participating COST countries and cost-efficiency. The MC and WG meetings will take place twice a year and be organized alongside each other, with one set of these meetings held in Brussels.

The work programme will be sub-divided into three thematic Working Groups (see D), each of which addresses a coherent intellectual domain with specific research questions, and one overarching one (see E2 below). Governed by the general strategy of the Action, the WGs will act autonomously and independently. Led by a WG Leader who will devise a work plan for coordinated research and dissemination, each WG will meet twice a year. The WGs will publish yearly progress reports, a final report and short yearly "OS briefings" for dissemination to the media and practitioners.

The Action will convene **four open conferences** (corresponding to the four phases of the scientific programme) to facilitate networking and capacity building and the dissemination of ideas and knowledge within the Action, with the wider research community and the policy and practice communities. At these events, each WG will report on their activities.

The inaugural **year 1 conference** will introduce participants to the Action and its working groups, review the 'state of the art' in studies of OS, and include input from international experts in the field. In **year 2 and 3**, the conference themes will reflect the ongoing work of the groups, with responses from international experts external to the Action. Immediately prior to the third conference there will be a **Training School** for new and Early-Stage Researchers. In **year 4**, the final conference in Brussels will disseminate and debate the Action's research activity to wider academic audiences and to other end users, and set an agenda for further research and development. This conference will present the final report of the Action as well as the reports of the separate WGs and will provide a forum for making recommendations for modifications to public policy and practice.

Additionally, an average of **4 Short-Term Scientific Missions per year** (one per WG) will be organised, and the beneficiaries will report on these at the subsequent yearly conference. The Action will also include an **Early-Stage Researchers' 'Think Tank'** (as envisaged in COST 295/09). Think Tank meetings will be convened alongside or within the annual conferences and/or connected to particular WG meetings.

A **website** for the Action will be created and regularly updated to facilitate discussion and information exchange and the dissemination of the aims, objectives, activities and findings of the Action. It will provide links to blogs, relevant agencies working in the OS area, and information about relevant upcoming publications and conferences. All materials generated by the Action will be made available through the website, including – discussion papers, conference proceedings, presentations, podcasts, briefings and reports. The website will also be used to stimulate regular contact between the members of the respective Working Groups and between the Working Groups. For each Working Group, a secure online meeting space accessible only to members of the Working Group and members of the MC will be created. The provision of dedicated web-space on the Action website for Early Stage Researchers will assist in creating and sustaining a community of interest through which to ensure that their interests and concerns are well represented in all activities of the Action.

## **E.2 Working Groups**

The Action has three thematic working groups corresponding to the three scientific domains elaborated in section D: (1) experiencing OS; (2) practising OS; and (3) contextualizing OS. The outline plans for these working groups is discussed in Section D.

A further overarching Working Group on "**Exchanges with European Policy and Practice**" will maximize the non-academic impact of the Action by working with the three thematic Working Groups and the MC to develop and sustain strong relationships with non-academic stakeholders and research users, primarily by developing expertise in modes of exchange, dialogue and dissemination that work best to secure and support effective non-academic engagement. Key external partners will be CEP and probation educators.

### **E.3 Liaison and interaction with other research programmes**

During the preparation of this proposal, the proposer has been in regular contact with the Action Chair of IS0807 Living in Surveillance Societies (LISS). Further exchanges are envisaged, although the degree of overlap between LISS and this proposed Action is slight.

The proposer of this Action and/or other colleagues involved in its preparation are involved with or aware of a number of other European programmes elaborated in section **B.4** to which this Action might relate, to varying extents. These links will be used to ensure that those involved in these existing projects participate in the various events coordinated by the Action where relevant. Funding has just been confirmed (on 28/7/11) for a new **ERASMUS** scheme to support development of a European Curriculum in Criminal Justice Social Work; this will provide an obvious conduit for the Action's outputs related to the development of professional education and practice.

The “**European Journal of Probation**” ([www.ejprob.ro](http://www.ejprob.ro)) has expressed willingness to promote the visibility of the Action and the dissemination of results, e. g. by publishing academic articles, working papers, and special issues edited by researchers from the Action.

Perhaps most helpfully, those involved in the development of this proposal are active members of the **European Society of Criminology's Working Group on Community Sanctions**. This group was formed in 2007 and has grown rapidly to include about 70 scholars from across 20 European jurisdictions, but its activities are limited to email communications, a conference stream within the annual ESC conference and an unfunded annual day seminar. Many of those involved in this working group are likely to become active and committed participants in this Action, and their existing relationships are likely to ensure that the Action develops its activities rapidly and effectively.

#### **E.4 Gender balance and involvement of early-stage researchers**

This COST Action will respect an appropriate gender balance in all its activities and the Management Committee will place this as a standard item on all its MC agendas. The Action will also be committed to considerably involve early-stage researchers. This item will also be placed as a standard item on all MC agendas.

The group behind this proposal comprises 2 men and 4 women, one of whom is an Early Stage Researcher. The list of participants identified by the submission date demonstrates a near-even gender balance and includes at least 8 Early Stage Researchers. It will be a key priority of the MC to ensure a wide geographical/jurisdictional distribution of benefits, contributions and responsibilities across the participating countries. This is further discussed in **Part IIE**.

The Action will also be committed to actively involving **Early Stage Researchers** in its Management Committee, in the provision for Short Term Scientific Missions (as noted above), in the Training School, and in its conferences and workshops. Where necessary and appropriate, the MC will develop appropriate financial procedures to facilitate this (for example, allocating set proportions of available budgets to be available only for ESRs, subject to the advice of the COST office).

#### **F. TIMETABLE**

##### **Timetable and Milestones**

The key milestones of the Action will be the events set out in the timetable below (Table 1). Linked to these milestones will be a series of deliverables coordinated by the Management Committee and related to the research outputs associated with the Dissemination Plan (section H).

<b>Table 1. OSE (Offender Supervision in Europe) COST Action Timetable</b>	
Year 1	Two meetings of the Management Committee
	Two meetings of the Working Groups
	Four Short Term Scientific Missions
	Inaugural Conference
Year 2	Two meetings of the Management Committee
	Two meetings of the Working Groups
	Four Short Term Scientific Missions
	Second Conference
Year 3	Two meetings of the Management Committee
	Two meetings of the Working Groups
	Four Short Term Scientific Missions
	Training School
	Third Conference
Year 4	Two meetings of the Management Committee
	Two meetings of the Working Groups
	Four Short Term Scientific Missions
	Final Conference (Brussels)

## **Deliverables**

The deliverable outputs of the Action, emanating from the scientific work plan, the Dissemination Plan and the key events and milestones of the Action, are set out below:

- Establish Management Committee and Working Groups (year 1)
- Formulate and agree Scientific Programme and Dissemination Plan (year 1)
- Creation of OSE website (year 1)
- Ongoing updating and maintenance of OSE website (years 1-4)
- Completion and publication of: Management Committee & Working Group progress reports (yrs 1-4)
- Completion and publication of Working Group non-academic outputs and briefings (years 1-4)
- Completion and publication of annual newsletter (years 1-4)



- Ongoing publication of research outputs (years 1-4)
- Publication of reports for Short-Term Scientific Missions (years 1-4)
- Publication of conference proceedings (years 1-4)
- Publication of report on Training School (year 3)
- Completion and publication of final report (year 4)

## **G. ECONOMIC DIMENSION**

The following COST countries have actively participated in the preparation of the Action or otherwise indicated their interest: AT, BE, DE, DK, ES, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, NL, NO, RO, SE, SK, UK. On the basis of national estimates, the economic dimension of the activities to be carried out under the Action has been estimated at 64 Million € for the total duration of the Action. This estimate is valid under the assumption that all the countries mentioned above but no other countries will participate in the Action. Any departure from this will change the total cost accordingly.

## **H. DISSEMINATION PLAN**

### **H.1 Who?**

The core objective of the Action is to exchange, increase and deepen knowledge about offender supervision in Europe, in order to better understand its evolution and development in social context; how it is experienced by those subject to it; how it is constituted and constructed by those that practice it; and what its impacts and consequences are for all of those affected by it. There are therefore several target audiences for this Action, reflecting its academic and non-academic significance. Many of these audiences have been discussed above (especially at C5), so they are listed only briefly here under three broad headings:

**Academics:** The academic community includes experts participating in the Action and other OS researchers working in the field as well as the broader academic community, particularly those interested in advancing comparative analyses of criminal justice. These academics encompass a very wide range of disciplines within and beyond the social sciences. A key purpose of the Action is to remedy a significant neglect on the study of punishment, so it is highly important that the findings of the Action are disseminated beyond those already interested in this specific field.

## Policy and Practice:

- **European institutions:** The interest of the EU and of the Council of Europe in issues of crime, justice and security has already been discussed.
- **National and Jurisdictional Policymakers:** Policy makers in every jurisdiction are increasingly concerned with how to make best use of increasingly scarce resources in the face of (apparent) public insecurity about crime (even in those jurisdictions where crime rates are falling).
- **Managers, Practitioners, Inspectors and Educators:** Those directly concerned with the practice of OS (whether as managers, practitioners, educators or inspectors) will be key beneficiaries of deeper and more comparatively informed understandings of OS.
- **Non-state Providers:** Those in the private or voluntary sectors concerned in the provision of commissioned OS services will have a clear interest in the Action's findings, not least for the better development of their services.
- **NGOs, Think Tanks, Reform Groups:** Those concerned with influencing the constructive or progressive development of justice systems -- sometimes through international or cross-national comparative analyses -- will have an interest in the Action's findings.
- **Media and Public:** The news media both feeds and reflects public concern about crime, and about the legitimacy and credibility of justice. The supervision of offenders in the community is a particular source of comment and debate. The findings of this Action will make a significant contribution to improving the quality of that debate.

## H.2 What?

These three intended audiences require somewhat different (though also somewhat overlapping) dissemination methods:

**Academic Dissemination:** Those academics (including Early Stage Researchers) participating in the Action will be involved in a range of events (Management Committee meetings, Working Group meetings, conferences, a Training School, Short Term Scientific Missions, etc.) each of which will allow for the exchange of information and materials. The broader academic community will also be invited to participate in conferences and will have access to conference proceedings, peer-reviewed journal articles, special issues of journals and edited collections that will emerge from the Action. The Action's public website will provide open access to information about the Action for participants and non-participants. An additional, secure area of the website will allow participants access to working papers, presentations, progress reports, circulation lists and a discussion forum. Further academic dissemination will take place through contributions to other national and international conferences and symposia.

**Policy and Practice Dissemination:** Throughout this proposal, stress has been placed on policymaker and practitioner engagement from the outset and throughout the duration of the Action (i.e. this is not considered a matter only for the latter stages of the Action). Principally through the active involvement of the CEP in the Action's Management Committee (and thus in coordination of all events), but also through the development of links with other policymakers and practitioners, the Action aims to maximize its non-academic impact. The Working Group dedicated to 'Exchanges with European Policy and Practice' will also work to develop and sustain relationships with practitioner colleagues and to identify the best methods of dissemination with them. At this stage, the proposal is for the development of practitioner briefings, newsletters, case studies, podcasts and training materials, though the precise means will depend on dialogue with policy and practice colleagues. Policymakers and practitioners will also be invited contributors, both as speakers and as delegates, to conferences and other events within the Action.

**Media and Public Dissemination:** The broader dissemination of the Action's activities and findings will be communicated to the general public both through the news media (for whom annual press briefings will be prepared) and more directly via the Action's website and the use of social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.). The public website will contain inactivates about activates and non-technical outputs of various forms (briefings, podcasts, interviews, etc.). Members of the news media will also be informed about key events, in particular the annual conferences.

### H.3 How?

The dissemination methods elaborated above will be used to fulfill a number of purposes. Firstly, they will allow effective communication amongst participants within the Action so as to ensure that participation is maximized and a sense of genuine engagement and ownership is generated. In the early stages of the Action, building awareness of events and activities and widening participation will be key concerns; to those ends the web presence of the Action will need to be lively, engaging, relevant and regularly updated. One key task will be the early creation of an online **repository of existing OS research materials and outputs** (which will draw researchers to the website) and of a **glossary of relevant terms** in this field (where terminology varies very significantly across jurisdictions and where even the same words (for example, "rehabilitation") may have multiple and contested meanings.

As the Action progresses, the dissemination methods will be used to communicate new findings and insights to all three of the communities referred to above. Generating a lively and engaging dialogue about offender supervision across these three communities of interest -- one that is underpinned by the best available research and evidence -- will be one key measure of the success of the Action. For those directly involved in the management and organization of the Action, the communication and dissemination strategy will be reviewed continuously (as a standing item on the MC and WG agendas) so as to ensure that the Action achieves its main aim and its objectives, including the development not just of new and better research, but of developed and improving researchers, fully engaged with their academic, non-academic and public audiences.