

A Proposal to COST (European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research). Call for Proposals for Actions within Social Sciences and Humanities, 2004.

Proposers: Andrés Barrera González, Universidad Complutense, Madrid
Joan Bestard-Camps, Universitat de Barcelona
Martine Segalen, Université de Nanterre-Paris X
Peter Skalník, Univerzita Pardubice, Czech Republic

Title: **Anthropology in Europe. Devising and Implementing a Collaborative Teaching-Training and Research Agenda**

Keywords: Anthropology. Research Agenda. Teaching and Training.
Europe. Cultural Perspective.

Abstract:

The primary aim of this ‘Action’ is to engage the cooperation of a wide network of Universities and Research Institutions from all over Europe in setting up Joint Teaching-Training Programmes in Anthropology, like for instance Joint Masters and European Doctorates. And in parallel to these teaching-training initiatives to formulate and start implementing a long term comparative research agenda in the field of Anthropology/Ethnology, on issues of disciplinary concern as regards Europe’s contemporary scene. That is, research on themes and issues that are theoretically challenging, methodologically innovative, socially relevant, and when it is fitting policy oriented.

That this initiative follows two complementary lines of action is not by mere chance. For we conceive teaching and research, namely at the graduate level, as intimately related, and not segregated, pursuits. Furthermore, this cooperative endeavor stands on previous collaboration among a number of the institutions that are to be involved in the COST Action. Namely, Erasmus/Socrates student and teacher exchanges, intensive programmes and research seminars, summer schools and conference workshops; and more immediately, an ‘exploratory workshop’ funded by the European Science Foundation (EW03-164) on: *Towards an Anthropology of Europe. Studying Europe Using Anthropology’s Methodology, a multi-university Teaching Course and Research Programme*. What we intend now is taking this last project a step ahead. For the proposal to COST is related directly to the outcome of the named ‘exploratory workshop’, where we agreed to pursue shared goals in the two directions outlined above.

More concretely, we agreed to convene two meetings, in a year’s time or so. One in Siena, dedicated to set afoot and start implementing joint teaching-training programmes among one or several sets of departments/universities in the network. Another in Paris, dedicated to discuss and agree on specific research projects to carry out in collaboration, again by one or several sets of research institutions involved in the network, or that are brought in for taking part in individual projects. Thus, the COST Action first year’s grant would eventually be used to finance the two workshops mentioned above. Grants of subsequent years would serve to maintain the overall coordination and monitoring of the individual projects springing from this ‘Action’; and to provide support for the writing and forwarding of applications to other programmes such as Socrates, Erasmus Mundus, EU Framework Programmes, European Science

Foundation, etc. in looking for the financial means needed to implement those individual and independent teaching-training and research projects. As well as to finance a series of workshops, seminars and meetings planned to meet the overall aims of the Action.

This quite ambitious endeavor will require concerting the efforts of a large number of scholars, and pulling together the resources of the teaching and research institutions they are affiliated to. The task ahead of us is demanding both in academic and organizational terms. Yet, what we aim is not at filling the whole of the gap, but at making a meaningful and hopefully decisive contribution in the right direction. A collaborative undertaking such as the one outlined here will bring about substantial benefits to the field of Anthropology, both in the teaching-training and research sides; and it is to be expected that will serve to advance its theory and methodology.

To sum up, the project will contribute to further the development of the discipline of Anthropology. And since it will be based and referred primarily to Europe, we might expect that in more general terms it will make a noteworthy contribution to the development of the European Research and Higher Education Areas. Furthermore, from perspectives in theory, in method and epistemology that are unique or distinctive to Anthropology, important contributions would be made (in bringing to a fruitful conclusion the research projects linked to this initiative) to a better understanding of Europe, and many of its most pressing concerns in the present, namely from a cultural perspective. Yet, this last objective can only be properly achieved if Anthropology recalls its true interdisciplinary ‘vocation’, in open dialogue with akin disciplines in the areas of the Social Sciences and the Humanities.

September 2004