CA24150 VISTA Bucharest Spring School 2027.
From populism to the future. Empirical and conceptual approaches

17-20 March 2027, Bucharest

4-days training devoted to PhD students, planned to occur in Bucharest, with international trainers, and with full coverage of travel and accommodation.

VISTA COST Action (CA24150 - Values in Turbulent Times. Navigating Social Changes and Challenges) is focused on value change in turbulent times, specifically asking to which extent global processes, including negative life events, contribute to changing individual and social values. Under its interdisciplinary approach, VISTA promotes reflection on exposure theory, along with more traditional socialisation hypothesis, scarcity assumption, and institutional approach to value formation and change.

VISTA's first spring training is scheduled to occur in March 2027 in Bucharest. The event aims to familiarize PhD students with hands-on methods and theory in the area, as a pretext for networking and generating idea.

Its idea is constructed around the rise of populism, which serves as a starting point for discussing theories of value formation and change, later applied to the dynamics of gender beliefs. Two days are developed to rather methodological approaches to studying value formation and change (in turbulent times).

Participants:

- Trainees: 30 PhD students from COST Full and Cooperating Member countries (https://www.cost.eu/about/members/#cost-v2-members-full)
- Trainers: 4 (one per day)

Location:

- University of Bucharest

Training format:

- The programme does not include computer-based practical sessions.

Trainers:

- Bogdan Voicu (*Academia Română*):
  The current populist values and the future. On value formation and change.
- Edurné Bartolome Peral (*Universidad* de *Deusto*, Bilbao)
  Gender backlash
- Hermann Dülmer (*Universität zu Köln*)
  Factorial surveys and the study of values
- Michael Ochsner (*FORS, Université de Lausanne*)
  Finding the ways of defining values, systematic reviews

The structure of the event implies for each day:

- Mornings: 3 hours of presentations and debate around the topic presented by the trainer;
- Lunch
- Afternoon: 3 hours during which 5 PhD students present their topics and get comments from the trainers, other PhD students, local professors part of VISTA and the Romanian Groups for Studying Social Values (Claudiu Tufiș, Marian Vasile). Each student will have 30 minutes: 15/20 minutes for the presentation and 10/15 minutes for questions and feedback.

Important dates:

- Launching the call: November 2026
- Application deadline: 8th December 2026, 5 p.m. CET.
- Acceptance decisions: 22nd of December 2026.
- Spring Training: 17-20.03.2027

Who can apply:

- PhD students from any COST Full or Cooperating Member Country
  https://www.cost.eu/about/members/#cost-v2-members-full

Application:

Please include the following:

- CV
- Brief description of the PhD topic (500 words)
- Letter of motivation, including the names of maximum two people that can recommend your application and their contact data (e-mail address)

Send everything by email to SpringTraining27@romanianvalues.ro before the deadline.

Reimbursement:

- 20 successful applicants are reimbursed under COST Action rules (https://www.cost.eu/uploads/2026/11/COST-094-21-Annotated-Rules-for-COST-Actions-Level-C-V4.0-final-clean.pdf)
- 10 more can be accepted without reimbursement.
- The successful applicants will receive an invitation form the e-Cost platform and specific guidelines on reimbursement will be provided. In short, the participant advances the payment for travel and accommodation and can ask for reimbursement through the e-cost platform, attaching the requested documentation. COST reimburses the cost of the journey and a lumpsum of 204 EURO per day (the number of days is subject of calculation depending on travel details).

Selection criteria for admission

Eligible applications will be assessed on a scale of 100 points according to the following criteria:

- **Relevance of the PhD research – up to 40 points:** Alignment of the applicant's research with the objectives of the VISTA COST Action and with one or more of the thematic or methodological areas covered by the Spring School.
- **Motivation and expected training benefits – up to 30 points:** Clear identification of the applicant's learning needs and explanation of how participation will support the development of their PhD research.

- **Potential contribution to the VISTA network – up to 20 points:** Concrete opportunities to contribute to discussions, share research perspectives, and develop collaborations within the network. Previous involvement in VISTA is not required.
- **Affiliation with an institution located in a COST Inclusiveness Target Country (ITC) – 10 points.**

Applicants must obtain at least 20 out of 40 points under the first criterion to be considered for admission. Applications will then be ranked according to their total score. In the event of equal scores, geographical diversity and gender balance will guide the final selection, in line with the COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy.

Funded places will be allocated according to the resulting ranking, subject to COST eligibility rules and the available budget. A reserve list will also be established.

Organization committee:

Claudiu Tufiș, Bogdan Voicu, Maria-Francesca Cristea, Lucian Burci.