Dear Sir or Madam,

I am happy to provide a reference letter for Dr. Christine Nussbaum and her application for a PRIME Fellowship with the topic “variability and flexibility in the perception of synthetic voices”. I know Christine Nussbaum since 2019 and I was the co-supervisor of her PhD-project “Vocal emotions on the brain: The role of acoustic parameters and musicality”, which she completed with summa cum laude in 2023. We continued our collaboration beyond her PhD, with four published papers and another one currently under review.

Mrs Nussbaum is an excellent researcher. Her dissertation presented an impressive collection of five studies, spanning a range of methodologies including voice morphing, EEG (ERPs, time-frequency analysis), and special populations. All of that within the chaos of the Covid-19 pandemic. Her work is both conceptually and technically challenging. Mrs. Nussbaum demonstrates an impressive skill set for conducting psychological and neuroscientific research. She is also deeply committed to the principles of open science and excels in terms of transparency and reproducibility of her research. Over the course of several years, I had many scientific discussions with her, which revealed her deep intrinsic motivation to unravel every little corner of her own research and her courage to reflect bluntly on all challenges and pitfalls of her work. The rigorous confrontation with the potential limitations of her PhD experiment – unnatural sounding voices due to acoustic manipulation – had ultimately inspired her for her habilitation topic: voice naturalness.

Her dissertation was not only unanimously marked with summa cum laude by all three reviewers, it has also been awarded several prizes: the local Ammelie Mummendey Prize by the Institute of Psychology in Jena, but most importantly, the 3rd prize of the Dissertation competition by the DGPs in general psychology. She has already >10 peer reviewed publications, 7 of those in first authorship, has been invited to international symposia and presented her work on several conferences, ~10 years of teaching experience and supervised > 15 Bachelor and Master theses.

In her time as a post-doc, Mrs Nussbaum already successfully applied for third-party funding and will soon co-supervise her first PhD student on the topic “Neurocognitive processing of voice naturalness in human and synthetic voices”. Most notably, she recently published a conceptual paper entitled “Understanding voice naturalness” in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, a highly-ranked journal in our field. This work attests to one of Mrs Nussbaums strongest suits: she is a sound and critical thinker, and capable to analyze a research field, identify important gaps and pursue meaningful research projects in order to push the field forwards.

Mrs. Nussbaum is an outstanding young scholar who is already a game-changer in the field of affective and cognitive neuroscience. And indeed, the field is in need of scholars like her, that push theory forward and back it up with robust empirical knowledge. In my view, Mrs. Nussbaum has great research potential and I am convinced that the PRIME Fellowship is an ideal next step to bring her career forward.

The proposed research project presents an ambitious set of studies. It is clearly motivated, based on the theoretical framework that Mrs. Nussbaum proposed in her TiCS paper and of high scientific relevance. Mrs. Nussbaum has successfully completed very challenging research projects in her PhD already, therefore I have no doubt that she fully qualified to complete the proposed plan, which will reveal valuable new knowledge about the individual dynamics of synthetic voice perception, which will ultimately lead to well-written, impactful publications.

Hinweise:

Ein Gutachten/Referenzschreiben eines Hochschullehrenden sowie das dazugehörende Gutachtenformular. Das Gutachtenformular finden Sie im DAAD-Portal unter der Rubrik „Personenbezogene Förderung“; es kann nach der Registrierung im Portal erzeugt werden und muss mit der Bewerbung hochgeladen werden. Das Gutachten soll insbesondere auf die persönliche und wissenschaftliche Eignung der Bewerbenden für das geplante Vorhaben eingehen. Es sollte in der Regel von der Betreuerin oder dem Betreuer der Doktorarbeit erstellt werden, Ausnahmen sollten Sie begründen. Gutachten und Einladungsschreiben sollten von unterschiedlichen Personen kommen.