

# What are Opinions? Integrating Theory and Methods for Automatically Analyzing Opinionated Communication (OPINION)

## MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

COST ACTION CA21129 OPINION, 28 June 2023, Charles University, Prague

Taken by Christian Baden (Chair)

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#### ACTION Status

- CSO approval: 27/05/2022
- Start date: 22/09/2022

## 1 ATTENDANCE

### **COST Organization:**

Emiljano Kaziaj (SO)

### **MC Members:**

Carlos Arcila Calderon (ES), Christian Baden (IL), Agnieszka Hess (PL), Mirjana Ilic (RS), Aleksandra Krstic (RS), Tamara Kunic (HR), Eetu Mäkelä (FI), Franziska Marquart (DK), Jaromir Mazak (CZ), Besjana Mema Tosuni (AL), Dimitra Milioni (CY), Larisa Mistrean (MD), Anela Mulahmetovic Ibrisimovic (BA), Tom Nicholls (UK), Yucel Saygin (TR), Martijn Schoonvelde (IE), Agnieszka Stepinska (PL), , Ilija Tomanic Trivundza (SI), Samia Touileb (NO), Selma Veseljevic Jerkovic (BA), Srdjan Vesic (FR), Lenka Vochocova (CZ), Kasper Welbers (NL), Asta Zelenkauskaitė (LT)

### **Temporary MC Members:**

Thorsten Quandt (DE)

### **Guests:**

Aysen Simsek (Grant Manager), Wouter van Atteveldt (GH Vice SR)

(please see Annex A for signed attendance list)

### **20 MC member countries represented:**

Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, UK.

### **13 MC member countries not represented:**

Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland

**The quorum is thus fulfilled.**

## 2 OBJECTIVES

The Objectives of the MC1 meeting are:

- Provide accountability of CG
- Discuss Science & Communication Plan
- Adopt Publication Policy
- Planning of meetings and WBP toward GP2

### 3 AGENDA

#### Welcome

1. Verification of the quorum & Adoption of the Agenda

#### Reports to the MC & Validation of Decisions

2. Membership Update
  - a. New members
  - b. Inclusiveness & Excellence Policy
3. Core Group Activity Report
  - a. Adoption of Minutes from the previous meeting
  - b. Past e-Votes
  - c. Means of communication: Slack, Mailing Lists, etc.
  - d. Prague WG+MC meeting
  - e. Challenges in the planning process
4. Meetings & Working Group Activities
  - a. Progress toward Objectives/Deliverables for current GP
  - b. Validation of New Working Group Vice Chairs
5. Mobility Strategy & Grants
6. Science Communication Plan
  - a. Stakeholder network
7. Administration & Budget Report

#### Planning & Network Policies

8. Updates to GP1 Work & Budget Plan/Draft of GP2 Work & Budget Plan
  - a. WG Meetings in Fall
  - b. Network Meeting in Winter
  - c. Further Meetings
  - d. Training School
  - e. Mobility & Grants
9. Publication Policy
10. Monitoring & Reporting to COST

#### Any Other Business

11. Summary of decisions & Closing

### 4 WELCOME

The MC welcomes Larisa Mistrean, who joins us as MC Member for Moldova, and Thorsten Quandt, who temporarily takes over the German vote.

The MC thanks Jonila Godole, who will step down as Albanian MC Member.

## 5 CORE GROUP ACTIVITY REPORT I: Membership

The Network continues to grow at a steady rate of about 7-8 applications per month, with about 75%-80% of applications accepted.

Since the last MC Meeting, the CG reviewed and accepted 18 applications, and rejected 7. The MC members were provided a full list of decisions.

Every application is reviewed by the entire CG plus WG leaderships (i.e., including Vice Chairs). Admission criteria include

- relevance and clarity of the contribution
- fit with/needs of the WGs
- regional, disciplinary, career stage and gender diversity
- MC members and secondary proposers are accepted by default

This brings the network up to a size of 165 WG members from 39 countries.

Diversity indicators are nearly unchanged since the last MC meeting: Half our members come from ITCs, we have about 55% female members, 45% early career scholars. About a third of the membership is also member of the MC.

In terms of member countries, the largest communities come from Germany (15), Albania (12), Netherlands and Poland (10 each). We still lack representation in Bulgaria, Georgia, Iceland, Montenegro and Ukraine.

In terms of Working Groups, we have two larger WGs (WG1: 76 members, WG2: 84 members) and two smaller ones (WG3: 48 members, WG4: 38 members), with significant overlaps in membership between WGs 1 and 2, 2 and 3, and 1 and 4. WG1 has the fewest early career scholars (38%); WG2 has the fewest members from ITCs (40%) and as the only WG has gender parity; WG3 has the most ITC members, and WG4 has most female (71%) and most early career members (47%).

The CG is overall satisfied with the development of membership and proposes to continue present policies. Action points include extending representation to the remaining COST countries, and raising the share of ITC members in WG2.

*The MC unanimously approves of the membership decisions and proposed measures.*

## 6 CORE GROUP ACTIVITY REPORT II: Updates

### *Administrative Matters*

The MC approves of the Minutes from the previous MC meeting.

Since the last MC meeting, we were offered an additional 40.000 € from COST, which we pledged to allocated to two purposes:

- making the Prague meeting maximally inclusive, so anyone interested can attend
- enabling WGs to schedule WG-specific meetings in summer/fall

The added budget had already been validated by e-Vote.

### *Means of Communication*

The CG has established the following means of communication for the network:

- The website is now fully functional. Next expansions will include a tab for grants, a tab for outreach/science communication, and a tab for outcomes/publications.
- OPINION operates two Slack working spaces. One (paid) Slack working space serves the CG and other members who are involved in administering the network (presently, the Grant Manager and WG Vice Chairs). It offers a convenient permanent tally for the record. The other (unpaid) working space serves the entire membership and enables the free creation of channels and discussions for all kinds of purposes. On the unpaid working space, messages expire after 90 days.
- OPINION operates six free mailing lists: One for the entire network, one for the MC, and one each for every WG. These mailing lists serve to efficiently disseminate announcements and news relevant to the network.
- Beyond these, the network is making liberal use of various video conferencing software, document sharing tools and other applications that can be integrated within Slack.

We are nudging members to join the Slack working space and the mailing lists to facilitate communication.

### *Meeting Planning*

Inviting members to attend the Prague meeting without any restrictions or quotas has resulted in a much bigger and more diverse meeting, but also some noted imbalances in participation between different member countries. However, as the most well-represented communities are ITC members, we do not consider this a problem, as their inclusion is a priority task for the network.

We have experienced excellent attendance, with only 2 out of 83 listed invitees did not make it. There were a few cancellations beforehand, which was to be expected.

The main concern regarding attendance has to do with visa. For members who require visa, attendance has been impossible in at least two cases that we know about due to slow visa processing times. In the future, we will announce meetings much earlier if possible, so as to facilitate securing visa.

The CG reminds everyone that, as meetings are the main positions of expenditure, it significantly facilitates planning if members indicate their intention to participate in meetings as early as possible.

The CG will use a survey among the membership to determine the optimal balance between parallel WG sessions (which are efficient and enable cross-WG communication, but require members to choose); WG-specific meetings (where all members can participate); and possibly dedicated spaces in the program for project group collaborations that grow out of the present network.

## Planning challenges

Under COST rules, all budget must be spent within the relevant grant period, which means that all expenditure must be finalized in eCOST by one month after the end of the grant period. This imposes some restrictions on activities toward the end of the GP, so as to ensure that all reimbursements can be processed in time.

There is also the observation that eCOST tends to overbudget expenditure, which constrains our ability to plan expenditure after big meetings.

The CG will propose a new Work & Budget Plan for GP2 as early as possible so as to avoid delays in the planning toward the beginning of the new GP.

Key strategies for planning efficiencies include:

- planning well ahead, with as concrete dates, locations, and numbers as possible
- planning the biggest meetings early enough in the GP to be able to adjust smaller expenditure left after these.

## 7 WORKING GROUP ACTIVITY REPORTS

In light of the fact that each WG already reported on its activities during the closing plenary, in the presence of the MC members, this agenda point was skipped. For the WG activity report, please refer to the WG Meeting's minutes.

### Elections for WG3 Vice Chair

WG3 has selected Hajo Boomgaarden (U Vienna) as Vice Chair.

*The MC unanimously validates Hajo Boomgaarden as WG3 Vice Chair.*

- Who do we need to listen to?
- Who will benefit from listening to us?
- How can we reach out to them?
- How can we ensure inclusion and diversity?

## ***Means & Tools***

For each stakeholder group, somewhat different means of communication and outreach may be appropriate.

- Publications, conferences, masterclasses and similar measures primarily address the academic audience
- Workshops, stakeholder liaison, and similar measures are primarily aimed to address professional stakeholders
- Events, opinion pieces, podcasts, and similar measures primarily address the general public
- The online resources rendered available via OPINION's website and, in the future, the virtual lab, serve all of these audiences

The choice of means in the SCP is less set in stone than the objectives and stakeholders and can be liberally amended; the purpose here is more to commit the network to a minimum set of activities that are necessary to engage in fruitful outreach activities.

The WGs and network leadership are in ongoing consultation with the Science Communication Officer, and preparing a final version of the SCP to be formally adopted by the MC within the month.

*The MC unanimously approves of the presented strategy for the SCP.*

## **Election for Stakeholder Liaison Officer**

Candidate: Elena Negrea Busuioc, National U of Political Studies & Public Admin.

*The MC unanimously elects Elena Negrea Busuioc as Stakeholder Liaison Officer*



## 10 ADMINISTRATION & BUDGET REPORT

In GP1, almost the entire budget is dedicated to WG meetings: The joint meetings in Amsterdam and Prague, and hopefully some WG-specific meetings in fall. The Grant Manager presented the current breakdown of allocated funds:

### Work and Budget Plan Summary

<b>A. COST Networking Tools</b>	<b>EUR</b>
(1) Meetings	129,380.27
(2) Training Schools	0.00
(3) Mobility of Researchers and Innovators	12,402.00
(4) Presentation at Conferences organised by Third Parties	0.00
(5) Dissemination and Communication Products	800.00
(6) Other Expenses Related to Scientific Activities (OERSA)	895.65
<b>B. Total Science Expenditure (sum of (1) to (6))</b>	<b>143,477.92</b>
<b>C. Financial and Scientific Administration and Coordination (FSAC) (max. of 15% of B)</b>	<b>21,521.69</b>
<b>Total Grant (B+C)</b>	<b>164,999.61</b>

Regarding actual expenditure, there are some inevitable discrepancies between planning and eventual costs, because costs depend on actual attendance and travel costs. For instance, for the Amsterdam meeting, 48 participants received reimbursement, to a total cost of 34,559.10 €, which is almost 9,000 € less than was budgeted. To this cost is added 15% of FSAC, which essentially pays for the administration of the reimbursements (in the person of the Grant Manager), so effective costs were 39,7742.85 €.

For the Prague meeting, OPINION has presently committed 96,000.00 €, although we expect to spend less than that. Other remaining plans include funds for a WG1 and WG3 meeting in fall.

Networking Expenditure Totals	Grant budget ( a )	Expenditure					Delta ( g=f-a )
		Actuals ( b )	Accruals ( c )	Total ( d=b+c )	Forecast ( e )	Total ( f=d+e )	
	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR
Meetings	129 380.27	34 559.10	0.00	34 559.10	133 261.00	167 820.10	38 439.83
Training Schools	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Short-Term Scientific Mission	12 402.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12 402.00	12 402.00	0.00
Virtual Mobility	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
ITC Conference	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dissemination Conference	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dissemination and Communication Products	800.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	800.00	800.00	0.00
OERSA	895.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	895.65	895.65	0.00
Virtual Networking Support	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Networking expenditure	143 477.92	34 559.10	0.00	34 559.10	147 358.65	181 917.75	38 439.83

Eligible Networking Expenditure Totals	Grant budget ( a )	Expenditure					Delta ( g=f-a )
		Actuals ( b )	Accruals ( c )	Total ( d=b+c )	Forecast ( e )	Total ( f=d+e )	
	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR
Eligible Networking expenditure	143 477.92	34 559.10	0.00	34 559.10	108 918.82	143 477.92	0.00
<b>FSAC (max 15%)</b>	<b>21 521.69</b>	<b>5 183.87</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>5 183.87</b>	<b>16 337.82</b>	<b>21 521.69</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Total eligible expenditure</b>	<b>164 999.61</b>	<b>39 742.97</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>39 742.97</b>	<b>125 256.64</b>	<b>164 999.61</b>	<b>0.00</b>

To handle these costs, the Grant Holder needs to request funds from COST according to a specified system. We were already paid half of the original allocated funds (62,500.00 €), while the other half, plus the additional funds, are still held by COST. For the reimbursements following the Prague meeting, we will request the maximum rate for the second payment, 57,749.86 €, and we hope that this will be sufficient to cover all expenses for this meeting. The remaining money will be paid to the Grant Holder as a final payment only at the end of the Grant Period.

## 11 PLANNING

### Joint Network Meetings

For the next joint network meeting, we are invited by Cyprus University of Technology in Limassol, Cyprus. Our local host will be Dimitra Milioni. The current plan is to schedule the meeting for the third week in January. Exact dates will follow as soon as possible.

The CG will scout some information about efficient flights to Cyprus, which will likely require some layovers for many attendees.

*The MC unanimously approves of this plan.*

For the summer meeting, the University of Salamanca, Spain has declared interest in hosting our meeting, together with a planned training school. The CG will follow up and inform the MC about plans as they materialize.

*The MC unanimously supports these propositions.*

## 12 PUBLICATION POLICY

The tentative outputs to be generated by each WG are defined in the Science Communication Plan, and thus do not require a separate publication policy.

OPINION lays down the following rules for publications that emerge from the network:

### **Joint publications based in the work of the WGs (“centripetal”)**

- Lead authorship is credited to leading contributors.
- Authorship requires an active contribution (e.g., writing, data collection, ...) without which the publication could not have taken its overall shape. Participation in discussions does not constitute a claim to authorship.
- For all publications that arise from the joint work of the WGs (“centripetal”), all WG members are to be invited to participate and earn authorship if they wish.
- Any WG members who are not authors but participated in the joint discussions are to be acknowledged by name in a footnote or acknowledgement.

### **Publications based on collaborations that grow out of the network (“centrifugal”)**

In accordance with COST adoption rules, OPINION will recognize as network publication any publications that...

- Involve at least three authors based at different institutions who are members of the network
- Are thematically relevant to OPINION and endorsed as such by any WG
- Provided that the authors wish the publication to be included as such.

Any publications of the abovementioned types are eligible for support (e.g., for copyediting, translation, open access fees) by the network, subject to available funding.

## 13 REPORTING

The administrative report to COST will be compiled by the Grant Manager and GHSR in collaboration with the Chair.

The activity reports will be collated by the WG Chairs, the Grant Coordination Officer, and the Science Communication Officer in collaboration with the Chair.

The Policy Monitoring report will be collated by the Vice Chair in collaboration with the Chair.







## ANNEX B: WORKING GROUP APPLICATIONS

<i>Accepted</i>		WG(s)
Beck	Tilman	2+3
Bedretdin	Umit	1+2
Bojic	Ljubisa	1+2
de Vries	Erik	2
Durmas	Mustafa Furkan	3+4
Ferrer Conill	Raul	1+4
Jovancevic	Ana	3+4
Jungblut	Marc	1+4
Kalvas	Frantisek	2+3
Koltsova	Olessia	2+3
Lombart	Erika	1+4
Lumani Zaccellari	Manjola	3
Mackova	Alena	1+4
Mistrean	Larisa	3+4
Novotna	Martina	1+4
Robnik-Sikonja	Marko	2
Toivanen	Pihla	2+3
Trojszak	Marcin	1
<i>Rejected</i>		
Bayar Muluk	Nuray	
Konno	Andres	
Krol	Malgorzata	
Sanchez-Holgado	Patricia	
Shabani	Lirim	
Terzioglu	Elifnur	
Torres	Miguel	