

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

## MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING I.2

COST ACTION CA21129 OPINION, 15 February 2023, Online

Compiled by Christian Baden

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#### ACTION Status

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

## 1 ATTENDANCE

### MC Members:

Janet A. Adikpo (TR), Giorgia Aiello (IT), Carlos Arcila Calderón (ES), Sally Broughton Micova (MK), Nicoleta Corbu (RO), Dimitra Dimitrakopoulou (GR), Constantinos Djouvas (CY), Bruno Ferreira Costa (PT), Halliki Harro-Loit (EE), Agnieszka Hess (PL), Anne Kaun (SE), Neta Kligler-Vilenchik (IL), Marios Koniaris (GR), Aleksandra Krstic (RS), Fabienne Lind (AT), Eetu Mäkelä (FI), Boris Mance (SI), Franziska Marquart (DK), Besjana Mema (AL), Dimitra Milioni (CY), Anela Mulahmetović Ibrišimović (BH), Marina Popescu (RO), Bharati Raja (IE), Martijn Schoonvelde (IE), Helle Sjøvaag (NO), Agnieszka Stepinska (PL), Carlo Strapparava (IT), Gabriella Szabó (HU), Samia Touileb (NO), Aleksandra Urman (CH), Hilde van den Bulck (BE), Leon van der Torre (LU), Srdjan Vesic (FR), Moran Yarchi (IL), Asta Zelenkauskaitė (LT)

### Others (Core Group Members)

Christian Baden (IL), Ana Milojevic (RS), Nina Springer (DE), Wouter van Atteveldt (NL)

### 28 MC member countries represented:

Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey

### 4 MC member countries not represented:

Croatia, Czech Republic, Netherlands

**The quorum is thus fulfilled.**

## 2 OBJECTIVES

The Objectives of the MC I.2 meeting are:

- validate the WG Vice Chair elections and appointment of the Vice GCO
- discuss WG Membership strategy for the second half of GP1
- schedule the WG I.2 meeting in summer
- discuss means of communication
- initiate collation of stakeholder network

### 3 NEW MEMBERS

## The MC welcomes its new members:

- Besjana Mema Tosuni (representing Albania, present)
- Anela Mulahmetovic Ibrisimovic (representing Bosnia and Herzegovina, present)
- Neta Kligler-Vilenchik (representing Israel, present)
- Eetu Mäkelää (representing Finland, present)
- Boris Mance (representing Slovenia)

The MC validates its new nominees:

- Selma Veseljevic Jerkovic (to represent Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Fabio Crestani (to represent Switzerland).

This brings our list of represented COST countries up to 32. We still lack MC representation in Bulgaria, Georgia, Iceland, Latvia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Slovakia and Ukraine.

## 4 VALIDATING THE OUTCOMES OF THE AMSTERDAM WG MEETING

Brief report from the Amsterdam WG I.2 meeting, Minutes to be circulated imminently (*Christian Baden*)

## Vice Chair Elections

- WG1 has elected *Carlos Cunha* (Lisbon U Institute) and *Nicoleta Corbu* (National U of Political Studies & Public Admin.) as WG Vice Chairs
- WG2 has elected *Srdjan Vesic* (Computer Science Research Institute Lens) as WG Vice Chair, the second seat remains vacant for now
- WG3 has not elected a WG Vice Chair but will appoint someone within the month
- WG4 has elected *Mariken van der Velden* (Vrije U Amsterdam) as WG Vice Chair, to join Science Communication Officer Ana Milojevic, who already serves as WG Vice Chair *ex officio*

*The MC votes to unanimously validate the Vice Chair elections.*

The Core Group appoints *Asta Zelenkauskaitė* (Vilnius Gediminas Technical U) as Vice Grant Coordination Officer.

## 5 WG MEMBERSHIP & STRATEGY

Since the previous MC meeting in Brussels, we have received a total of 52 new WG membership applications. Out of these, we rejected 7, and accepted 45.

To do so, the Core Group has carefully evaluated every application. So far, we generously approved applications as long as it was transparent how OPINION relates to the applicant's work and how the applicant means to contribute. We have also asked applicants to select maximum two WGs, in line with OPINION policy, and asked new members to only sign up for WG1 or WG2 if they mean to actively contribute to these, in light of the already large number of WG members.

That means that our membership has risen from 102 after the last MC meeting to 147, representing 39 countries (thereof 36 COST countries). At present, WG1 has 68 members, WG2 has 77, WG3 has 40 and WG4 has 29 members (thereof 69 dual memberships).

For the future, we need to decide how open we mean to remain, in order to strike a good balance between inclusiveness and working ability.

Considerations raised in the discussion:

- Might be good to be restrictive for a while, or even close some WGs entirely, so as to give present members a chance to focus on developing an Agenda
- Need to remain open for excellent people
- Need to continue including members especially from countries where we are not yet represented, or have small representation
- There may be WG-specific needs that need to be taken into account
- Also valuable to continue integrating generously to generate perspectives and increase impact
- WG1, which is among the more affected groups, sees no urgent need to close
- Core Group should carefully evaluate applications in collaboration with the now established WG Leaderships to continue admitting applicants that contribute to disciplinary, regional and other diversity criteria and where WGs still need support, but possibly apply stricter criteria as needed by the relevant WGs.

## 6 BUDGET REPORT

The Amsterdam WG I.1 Meeting was likely cheaper than estimated: We expect total expenses to be around € 33,000-34,000, relative to an estimated € 40,000. This means that there are additional resources available for the summer meeting and

other expenses, and also that participants are likely slightly cheaper than estimated, permitting a more inclusive WG meeting in summer.

Considerations raised in the discussion:

- Valuable to maximize inclusiveness at the WG I.2 meeting
- May be useful to allocate additional funding to STSMs
- Maybe reallocate funds only after the WG I.2 meeting, when we know what is left for Grant Period 1.

## 7 WG I.2 MEETING IN SUMMER

There are two sweet spots for locating our meeting between existing conferences that are of relevance to our membership:

- Last days of June or first days of July, around CEECOM Conference on 29-30 June in Brno, and the OPTED Project Final Conference on 4-5 July in Vienna
- First days of September, between the ECREA Political Communication Conference on 30-31 August in Berlin and the ECPR General Conference on 4-8 September in Prague

The Czech MC members, Lenka Vochocova and Jaromir Mazak have declared their willingness to host or help hosting a meeting in Czech Republic, and they have found willing hosts also at Mazaryk U Brno. There are practically three variants:

- Prague, 26-28 June (to be hosted at Charles U Prague)
- Brno, 26-28 June (to be hosted at Mazaryk U Brno)
- Prague, 1-3 September (to be hosted at Charles U Prague)

Considerations raised in the discussion

- Early September collides with a major computer science conference
- Better to meet earlier to keep the momentum
- Some regions (e.g., France, Scandinavia) will be back in the semester in September
- For people who fly in, Brno is easy to reach via Vienna, but Prague is still easier
- In Prague, we have current network members and MC members to rely on; in Brno, the potential hosts are not yet members, and the main prospective host will be on maternity leave

The MC supports the perspective of going to Czech Republic, but favors the earlier possible dates.

The CG will make arrangements with the Czech team.

## Further outlook

Dimitra Milioni has invited OPINION to come to Limassol, Cyprus in winter 2023/24.

We might go to Ljubljana, Slovenia, adjacent to the 2024 ECREA General conference.

## 8 STAKEHOLDER NETWORK

We hope to build a network of networks to identify relevant stakeholders in industry, policy, and beyond. For that purpose, *Helle Sjøvaag* (Vice Chair) has begun collecting names of relevant stakeholders.

We ask the MC members to coordinate on this effort for their respective countries, including reaching out to other OPINION members in their country.

Please add a tab for your country to this online spreadsheet.

## 9 COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Discussions at the WG I.1 meeting in Amsterdam point to several main kinds of communication needs:

- WGs will need to hold online meetings between the physical meetings; there is no need to centrally coordinate this, as WGs can host such meetings autonomously, using platforms that are convenient for the group (e.g., Zoom, Teams, ...).
- We will increasingly collate living documents (e.g., for collecting resources, references, etc.; collaborating on definitions). We suggest to rely on Google Docs for this purpose.
- We will need a platform for fast and flexible interactive communication. Key needs are a capacity to branch off into threads and subdiscussions for more specific collaborations, while maintaining an interactive communication space for the entire WGs. One suggestion is Slack, but maybe Discord offers an open source, for-free alternative. The Core Group will investigate and advise.
- We will need a capacity for a market-style platform to exchange haves and needs (e.g., conference panels, projects, workshops) that may be of relevance to the membership. The Core Group will investigate and advise.



