

## COST Action CA 17132: “European network for Argumentation and Public Policy analysis” (APPLY)

On Friday, 19 October 2018, the first meeting of the Management Committee of the COST Action APPLY took place in Brussels. This marks the official beginning of the 4-year project approved within the [COST](#) (European CO-operation in Science and Technology) programme – supported by the Horizon 2020 Programme.

The project, led by Dr. Marcin Lewiński, the coordinator of the Reasoning and Argumentation Lab at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, in Lisbon, Portugal, is aimed at consolidating and extending a pan-European network of scholars and public policy specialists interested in the topic of public argumentation (see [www.cost.eu/actions/CA17132](http://www.cost.eu/actions/CA17132)). Argumentation is defined as a communicative activity of producing and exchanging reasons in the context of doubt or disagreement. Accordingly, the project’s chief assumption is that policy issues can be understood as both reasoning and communication issues – while not denying their economic, political and legal determinants. Indeed, providing and criticising reasons is indispensable to achieve sound public policy that commands the support of both citizens and stakeholders. This need is now widely acknowledged in the recent literature and key EU documents, which highlight the perils of populist discourse and policies. The APPLY project improves the way European citizens understand, evaluate and contribute to public decision-making on such matters of common concern as climate change or energy policies. Addressing this need from a multidisciplinary perspective on argumentation, the APPLY Action identifies gaps between the citizens’, policymakers’ and scholarly experts’ argumentation, and explores ways of treating them.

The project’s network currently consists of almost a 100 scholars and experts from 32 European countries, as well as Canada and the United States. This includes 9 researchers from the Universidade Nova, working in fields such as philosophy, communication, and computer science. According to the COST rules, this network can further expand. Apart from Lisbon’s ArgLab (PT), it involves the most prominent centres of argumentation studies, such as the University of Amsterdam (NL), University of Lugano (CH) and University of Windsor (CA). Overall, the network is broadly multidisciplinary, including philosophers, linguists, discourse analysts, communication and media scholars, (social) psychologists, legal scholars, political scholars, computer scientists, as well as public policy experts. They coordinate their research activities through three Working Groups in the three main areas of the project: a) **descriptive**: an argumentative analysis of EU policy documents and procedures, the media and citizens’ discourse that results in an annotated pan-European database on institutional and citizens’ argumentation; b) **normative**: a critical study of concepts and methods to measure the quality of arguments in public policies that results in a unified theoretical and methodological framework to analyse and evaluate public policy argument; c) **prescriptive**: the development of tools by which policymakers, citizens and various stakeholders engage in well-informed argumentative discussions. APPLY coordinates such networking activities as workshops, conferences, training schools and short-term scientific missions among European and



international scholars and stakeholders. This provides insights into the understanding, evaluation and production of public policy arguments. APPLY thus benefits European policymakers and citizens, but also consolidates a currently dispersed argumentation scholarship across Europe and beyond.

## Main facts:

- **Duration:** 2018-2022
- **Total budget:** € 500.000 - 700.000 (budget is determined annually with an average sum of € 134.000 per year)
- The project is dedicated to coordinate research and networking activities such as workshops, conferences, training schools and short-term scientific missions among European and international scholars and stakeholders
- Details of the project are available [www.cost.eu/actions/CA17132](http://www.cost.eu/actions/CA17132)
- At its official start in October 2018, the project involves around a 100 researchers in the area of argumentation studies from 34 countries (31 European, Canada, the USA, and Israel); the project will further grow to expand the network;
- The only COST project in the September 2018 call with a Portuguese institution as the Main Proposer
- The only COST project in this call with humanities (Philosophy and Linguistics) as the main areas (2.5%)
- Only 5 out of 40 Actions are in the field of social sciences (13 %) (APPLY also includes researchers from Communication, Political Science, Psychology and Law)
- The overall success rate: 9% (40 projects out 422 were approved)
- The first COST project in the history of the NOVA/FCSH as the Main Proposer (data available back to 1990s)
- The second COST project in the history of the Universidade NOVA as the Main Proposer (data available back to 1990s)

## Chief leadership positions:

### Main proposer /

**Action Chair:** Dr. Marcin Lewiński (ArgLab, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, PT)

**Action Vice-chair:** Dr. Steve Oswald (University of Fribourg, CH)

### Working Group 1: Empirical Study of Public Argumentation

WG Leader: Prof. Sara Greco (University of Lugano, CH)

WG Vice-leader: Prof. Barbara de Cock (University of Louvain, BE)

### Working Group 2: Norms of Public Argument: Concepts and Methods

WG Leader: Dr. Frank Zenker (University of Lund, SE)

WG Vice-leader: Dr. Jan Albert van Laar (University of Groningen, NL)



**Working Group 3: Designing Public Argumentation and Policymaking**  
WG Leader: Dr. Fabio Paglieri (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, IT)  
WG Vice-leader: t.b.c.

**Scientific Advisor:** Prof. Mark Aakhus (Rutgers University, NJ, USA)

**Short-Term Scientific Missions**

**Coordinator:** Prof. Mariusz Urbański (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, PL)

**Communication**

**Coordinator:** Dr. Jean Wagemans (University of Amsterdam, NL)

**Training School**

**Coordinator:** Dr. Gabrijela Kišiček (University of Zagreb, HR)

