DECISION

Subject: **Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the COST Action "European network for argumentation and public policy analysis" (APPLY) CA17132**

The COST Member Countries and/or the COST Cooperating State will find attached the Memorandum of Understanding for the COST Action European network for argumentation and public policy analysis approved by the Committee of Senior Officials through written procedure on 13 April 2018.

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

For the implementation of a COST Action designated as

COST Action CA17132
EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR ARGUMENTATION AND PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS (APPLY)

The COST Member Countries and/or the COST Cooperating State, accepting the present Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) wish to undertake joint activities of mutual interest and declare their common intention to participate in the COST Action (the Action), referred to above and described in the Technical Annex of this MoU.

The Action will be carried out in accordance with the set of COST Implementation Rules approved by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), or any new document amending or replacing them:
   a. "Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities" (COST 132/14 REV2);
   b. "COST Action Proposal Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval" (COST 133/14 REV);
   c. "COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment" (COST 134/14 REV2);
   d. "COST International Cooperation and Specific Organisations Participation" (COST 135/14 REV).

The main aim and objective of the Action is to Identify gaps between the citizens', policymakers' and scholarly experts' argumentation, and to explore ways of treating them. The Action thus aims to improve the way European citizens understand, evaluate and contribute to policy relevant decision-making processes on topics such as climate change and energy policy. This will be achieved through the specific objectives detailed in the Technical Annex.

The economic dimension of the activities carried out under the Action has been estimated, on the basis of information available during the planning of the Action, at EUR 48 million in 2017.

The MoU will enter into force once at least seven (7) COST Member Countries and/or COST Cooperating State have accepted it, and the corresponding Management Committee Members have been appointed, as described in the CSO Decision COST 134/14 REV2.

The COST Action will start from the date of the first Management Committee meeting and shall be implemented for a period of four (4) years, unless an extension is approved by the CSO following the procedure described in the CSO Decision COST 134/14 REV2.

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OVERVIEW

Summary

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 European network for Argumentation and Public PoLicY analysis (APPLY) 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. This occurs through coordinated research activities in three main areas: a) empirical: an argumentative analysis of EU policy documents and procedures, the media and citizens' discourse 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 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.

Areas of Expertise Relevant for the Action	Keywords
● Philosophy, Ethics and Religion: Epistemology, logic, philosophy of science and technology ● Media and communications: Media and communications, social aspects of information science and surveillance, socio-cultural communication ● Psychology: Social psychology ● Law: Legal theory, legal systems, constitutions, comparative law ● Languages and literature: Use of language: form, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, lexicography, terminology	● argumentation ● public policy ● argumentation design ● practical reasoning ● discourse analysis

Specific Objectives

To achieve the main objective described in this MoU, the following specific objectives shall be accomplished:

Research Coordination

● Systematic data collection, curation, and analysis. Network members contribute to a corpus based on data collected in past and ongoing individual research projects. The corpus is collected in structured face-to-face interviews and from online discussions, but also includes EU-documents and procedural guidelines, media reports, or citizens' discourse.

● Improving the methods for analysing and evaluating argumentation in public policy contexts. The Action will coordinate currently disjoint monodisciplinary projects investigating the shape and quality of public argument aiming at a theoretical and methodological integration.

● A joint research agenda on argumentation in public policymaking. The Action will coordinate, solidify and extend existing research connections and thematic lines into what can become a European approach to argumentation and public policy analysis. This particularly leads to shared theoretical concepts, methods, data, and eventually a (partially) shared agenda.

● Input from and to stakeholders. The Action will extend its network to engage public policy professionals and practitioners in order to fine-tune scholarly results and actual policy practices. The Action will collaborate with policymakers, NGOs, citizen associations and SMEs currently providing argumentation-related services, at the EU, national and local level.

Capacity Building

● Knowledge transfers beyond traditional niche communities. The Action will achieve transfer across national and disciplinary traditions: the Dutch theories of pragma-dialectics and formal dialectics, the French and Swiss linguistic analysis, the Canadian school of informal logic, the Polish logical tradition, (critical) discourse analysis, philosophical approaches to practical reason, etc.

● Create and solidify knowledge exchanges between different expertise groups: a) academics at various career stages from Early Career Investigators (ECIs) to seasoned professors; b) research teams with divergent impact and capacity, including those from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs); c) academics and public policy professionals.

● Public dissemination. Through a dedicated website, and a comprehensive dissemination strategy, the Action will make tools for argument analysis, evaluation and production as well as empirical results available to stakeholders and the general public. It will thereby enhance the capacity of argumentation scholars to engage beyond their academic community.

TECHNICAL ANNEX

1. S&T EXCELLENCE

1.1. CHALLENGE

1.1.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE CHALLENGE (MAIN AIM)

Providing and criticising reasons is indispensable to achieve sound public policy that commands the support of both citizens and stakeholders. The European Network for **A**rgumentation and **P**ublic **P**o**L**ic**Y** Analysis (APPLY) aims to improve the way European citizens understand, evaluate and contribute to policy relevant decision-making processes on topics such as climate change and energy policy. Our notion of "European citizens" includes members of the public as much as policymakers, stakeholders and scholars. Improvements the APPLY Action delivers arise from coordinating contributions of members of these groups on natural language argumentation. This leads to synergies in self-reflexively understanding the praxis of argumentation in Europe and beyond.

From a multidisciplinary perspective, the Action identifies three problematic aspects that we refer to as "the three gaps" (see Figure 1):

1) The gap between citizens' and policymakers' argumentation
Citizens often cannot understand, and so cannot fully appreciate, the technical and institutional language of EU policymakers. The Action investigates the ensuing problems of legitimacy and democratic deficit (e.g., the turn to populism) as an aspect of natural language argumentation.

2) The gap between normative theory and institutional practice
Current institutional procedures and conventions convey forms of rationality that differ from the normative conceptions developed in argumentation theory. How and why do institutions depart from idealised procedures and products of argumentation? Can this departure be legitimate?

3) The gap between normative theory and citizens' practice of argumentation
Which forms of reasoning fuel citizens' assessments and decisions, and why? In what sense are such forms fallacious or contextually reasonable?

Figure 1 Gaps in public policy argumentation
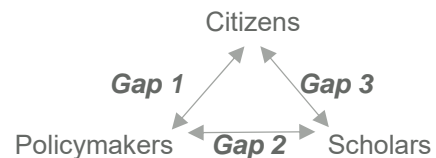
Argumentation is an interdisciplinary topic. Therefore, the Action's major objective is to address the three gaps by coordinating research in linguistics, philosophy, communication science, psychology, and legal theory, among others. The Action will do so by building a network that strengthens argumentation scholarship (which is currently dispersed across the social sciences and humanities), but also engages face-to-face with policymakers, stakeholders, and the public. Network-members will contribute their research outputs and professional expertise from local/national projects; the network will thus provide a platform for synergies and new collaborative work.

The Action's activities consist of:

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a) **empirical research** (what is the case?) that studies EU documents and procedures, the media, and citizens' discourse;
b) **normative investigation** (what ought to be the case?) of concepts and methods to assess the quality of public policy argument;
c) **prescriptive intervention** (what could become the case?) to develop tools and understanding that help participants to policy controversies achieve well-informed and well-considered argumentative discussions of their own design.

By addressing and bridging the gaps in public argumentation, the Action will pursue major goals such as democratisation, civil society engagement and better, more legitimate and efficient policymaking processes.

1.1.2. RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS

The gap between how citizens, policymakers and scholarly experts understand what *should* be done based on reason, is rightly referred to as a "democratic deficit," even a "legitimacy crisis." Having received public and scholarly attention (Dworkin, 2006; Follesdal & Hix, 2006; Habermas, 2009), the gap is exacerbated by the recent immigration "crisis," the Brexit, and the 2016 US elections. In the wake of these events, specifically the citizens-policymakers gap has been officially acknowledged by the European Commission as a major challenge for Europe (e.g., White Paper on the Future of Europe, 2017; Reflection Paper on the Social Dimension of Europe, 2017). Economic, social, demographic, and political explanations thereof have been provided, such as the post-2008 economic crisis or fear of immigration (e.g., Arnorsson & Zoega, 2016; Müller, 2016). The Action will innovatively build on such explanations by focusing on the unifying aspect of any public debate and policy: that pro and con reasons are invariably articulated in public argumentation.

The Action brings together scholars from European and International Partner Countries working within the social sciences and humanities. Interdisciplinary engagement is necessary to better understand the complex social phenomenon that is public argumentation. A number of local projects across Europe (and elsewhere) already address selected aspects of it (see Sect. 1.4.2). However, a well-coordinated and wide-reaching research network is not in place yet – nor are its benefits (data sharing, systematic comparisons, common conceptual and methodological advances, policy impact). Given the urgency of the identified challenges, creating critical mass for such a coordinated European and international Action is more necessary now than ever before.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. RESEARCH COORDINATION OBJECTIVES

The Action addresses argumentation as it affects the perceived rationality and legitimacy of public decision-making, a topic requiring coordination beyond national research projects and monodisciplinary approaches. The Action participants and their institutions will contribute existing research resources and findings to pursue four basic research coordination objectives:

1. Systematic data collection, curation, and analysis. Network members contribute to a corpus based on data collected in past and ongoing individual research projects. The corpus is collected in structured face-to-face interviews and from online discussions, but also includes EU-documents and procedural guidelines, media reports, or citizens' discourse. Thanks to participating institutions, data collection, curation, and analysis covers a local, national, and European level. Data collection will be managed by the Empirical Working Group (WG1), through its biannual meetings, workshops, and a dedicated online platform making data available. This corpus will facilitate qualitative and quantitative analyses of arguments pro or con specific policies at the micro-level (argument type), the meso-level of argumentative patterns typical for decision-making, and the macro-level of argumentative procedures that reflect institutional conventions and design. This will generate an annotated database across European languages.

2. Understanding, analysing and evaluating argumentation in public policy contexts. An interdisciplinary challenge, the analysis of public sphere argumentation requires coordinating currently disjoint monodisciplinary projects. Extant projects typically investigate similar material (in the form of texts or interactions which constitute public argument and policymaking), but often rely on discipline-specific methods and concepts. Chiefly through biannual meetings of the three Working Groups, but

also through Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM), network-members will develop a (more) consistent method of analysing argumentation (at the micro-, meso- and macro-levels detailed above). The Action will thus reach beyond extant work by means of both theoretical and methodological integration. Given the corpus and methods under objectives 1 and 2, the Action compares the gaps (as identified) between citizens', policymakers' and experts' understandings of "good reason-giving" in public sphere contexts. Outputs are academic publications, reports and presentations, as well as an annotated corpus of public argumentation (available online) for other researchers and agencies to use.

3. Input from and to stakeholders. In the 3ʳᵈ and 4ᵗʰ year of implementation, the Action will extend its network in order to exchange results with stakeholders. Engaging public policy professionals and practitioners is crucial to fine-tune scholarly results and actual policy practices. (All the same, this step must not occur too early.) This will include collaboration with policymakers at the EU, national and local level, including NGOs and citizen associations, as well as SMEs that currently provide various argumentation-related services. In this way, the Action will generate innovative, scholarly sound, and directly applicable tools for argument analysis, evaluation and production in public policy.

4. Public dissemination. Through a dedicated website, and a comprehensive dissemination strategy (see Sect. 2.2.2), the Action will make tools for argument analysis, evaluation and production as well as empirical results available to stakeholders and the general public.

1.2.2. CAPACITY-BUILDING OBJECTIVES

The Action pursues three capacity-building objectives:

1. **Build a joint research agenda on argumentation in public policymaking.** European and international expertise in analysing argumentation and public policy is diverse, dispersed, and interdisciplinary. Most researchers work individually or, in some cases, in small national teams. Comprehensive scholarly exchange is currently either overall rare (e.g., at conferences or workshops), or includes but few scholars. The Action will solidify and extend extant research connections and thematic lines into what can become a European approach to argumentation and public policy analysis. This particularly leads to shared theoretical concepts, methods, data, and eventually a (partially) shared agenda.

2. **Knowledge transfers beyond traditional niche communities.** Besides transferring concepts, methods, and results across disciplines (see above), the Action will achieve transfer across national traditions: e.g., the Dutch theories of pragma-dialectics and formal dialectics, the French and Swiss linguistic tradition, the Canadian school of informal logic, (critical) discourse analysis and the argumentative approach to social psychology developed in the UK, the Polish tradition of logical analysis, but also philosophical approaches to practical reason, among others.

3. **Create and solidify knowledge exchanges between different expertise groups:**

   3a) Academics at various career stages. The network comprises seasoned professors, mid-career scholars, and Early Career Investigators (ECIs). This will facilitate regular knowledge exchanges between these expertise groups, with a special focus on attracting and training ECIs by means of training schools, STSMs and workshops.

   3b) Research teams with divergent impact and capacity. The network already involves a mix of teams with established research achievements (theories, grants) and international recognition, and teams from countries that currently evidence a comparatively rudimentary capacity in the field of argumentation and policy analysis. As it grows, the Action will continue to engage teams which are genuinely new, and so require a critical mass to enter the high-quality international academia. The Action will generate this critical mass. Several of the network's activities – especially workshops and training schools – will be organised in Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs), reaching out to local academic communities that can thus better engage with their regional and national stakeholders and the general public.

   3c) Academics and policy professionals. The Action will link the academic community of argumentation and policy scholars with various policymakers and stakeholders (see 2.2.1), thus generating multilateral knowledge and expertise transfers.

1.3. PROGRESS BEYOND THE STATE-OF-THE-ART AND INNOVATION POTENTIAL

1.3.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE-OF-THE-ART

Throughout all stages of decision-making procedures (from ideas, via deliberating alternative policies and assessing their impact, through policy proposals), institutional policymakers rely on various tools to support their deliberations. They predominantly employ formal methods for decision assessment (e.g. stakeholder-, risk-, and cost-benefit analysis; Fischer & Gottweis, 2012; Hansson & Hirsch Hadorn, 2016). These tools are typically precise and useful, but are nevertheless insufficient towards dealing with all relevant uncertainties, on one hand, and all expectable disagreements regarding alternative policies, on the other. In particular, no such tool fully accounts for the communicative aspect of democratic decision-making. This leaves unaddressed the very aspect that affects both the quality of the reasoning itself and its democratic legitimacy (Dworkin, 2006; Habermas, 2009; Hansson & Hirsch Hadorn, 2016). It is therefore no surprise that policies are often criticized as "technocratic inventions." For policies primarily reflect the intellectual context of experts, stakeholders, and policymakers, at the broad expense of reflecting the context of those being subject to a policy. So members of the public are often right when they lament that a policy fails to reflect their own point of view, as well as ways the public in fact argues. This engenders a communicative disconnect between the functional "elite" and the "masses," which populists currently exploit (Müller, 2016).

To address such problems, the Action will develop a comprehensive and unified approach grounded in argument analysis that understands policy issues as both reasoning and communication issues. Argumentation theory (van Eemeren et al., 2014; Lewinski & Mohammed, 2016) primarily investigates the practices and standards of argumentation. These are shaped by the communicative activity of giving and asking for reasons in the context of doubt or disagreement. The field has historically developed across the humanities (e.g., philosophy, linguistics) and social sciences (e.g., communication, legal theory, political science, psychology). It combines the descriptive study of how we actually argue with the normative inquiry into standards of good argumentation.

The connection between argumentation and public policy is fairly well-established, based on the assumption that "argumentation […] constitutes the primary consideration in the world of policy making" (Fischer & Gottweis, 2012: 14). In fact, the "argumentative turn" in policy studies has been announced at least thrice in major publications (Fischer & Forester, 1993; Fischer & Gottweiss, 2012; Hansson & Hirsch Hadorn, 2016). A parallel "deliberative turn" has been under way in political theory (see Dryzek, 2000). These contributions stress the need to focus on argumentation as crucial for policy making, as a quality control-tool that captures the rationality and legitimacy of public decisions.

At the application level, however, policy studies have so far failed to employ the full range of concepts and methods from argumentation theory. This is reflected in the practice of national and EU institutions, which often resort to commercial analytical tools from services such as Argument Maps. Though resource-costly, these often remain academically underwhelming (Lewinski, 2016). In public policy, then, much attention is paid to argumentation, but little to argumentation theory.

Argumentation theory has produced a wide array of concepts and methods for analysing and evaluating arguments. At the micro-level of argument types, individual argumentation schemes and structures (Freeman, 2011; Walton, Reed, & Macagno, 2008) and in particular practical argumentation in public policy context (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012) have been studied. The meso-level of argumentative patterns prototypical in public decision-making has recently attracted concerted attention (van Eemeren, 2017). Finally, broader institutional designs and procedures for conducting argumentation have been investigated at the macro-level (Jackson, 2015) including designs for multi-party practical argumentation (so called *polylogues*; Lewinski & Aakhus, 2014). Importantly, some influential studies remain largely normative, as they focus on the standards of reasoning and argumentation (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004; Tindale, 2015). Other researchers purse largely empirical investigation, applying methodologies originating in linguistics (Oswald, Herman, & Jacquin, in press; Rocci, 2017) or communication studies (Hample, 2005). This application of both normative and descriptive approaches allows us to identify the gaps between idealised and actual forms of argument, both in lay and institutional contexts. It is thus an adequate framework for addressing the main challenges identified in the Action. Moreover, systematically integrating the theoretical state-of-the-art into the analysis of policymaking lets the Action make an important contribution to the context where argumentation not only matters, but also counts.

1.3.2. PROGRESS BEYOND THE STATE-OF-THE-ART

The Action will consistently treat public policy issues as argumentation issues. Notions such as democratic deficit, populism, elite-discourse, bureaucratic mentality, and fallacious opinions will thus be defined as problems of argumentation, and opened to analysis. Using precise methods and tools of argumentation analysis and evaluation, it will thus give more body to the postulated argumentative turn in policy analysis. The notion of argumentation will also serve as a conceptual "glue" that brings various disciplines of social sciences and humanities together and lets them progress in novel ways.

However, argumentation theory itself is overall a rapidly growing but dispersed discipline (see van Eemeren et al., 2014). The Action identifies a number of areas of progress that can be achieved via networking opportunities given by COST. Regular meetings in all their forms (working group meetings, workshops, conferences, training schools, Short Term Scientific Missions) will contribute to a better theoretical and methodological research coordination. Through its activities, over its duration the Action will be at the centre of the discipline, which will facilitate constant updates of the state-of-the-art and important contributions to it. The Action will unify the current streaks of research and improve on novel concepts such as *polylogues*, argumentation designs and patters. The Action will engage policymakers and stakeholders, which will add the much-needed professional feedback to the current methods and findings. The Action will also engage a new generation of young scholars (ECIs, PhD students) who will be capable of further progressing within argumentation and policy studies after the Action is completed.

1.3.3. INNOVATION IN TACKLING THE CHALLENGE

The Action will be innovative in achieving the following objectives:

1) A network-based approach to research management and public engagement. The Action will go beyond the limits of small-group academic research projects on a local and national level through well-coordinated international networking activities.
2) Theoretical and methodological consolidation in two respects:
   a. Systematic analysis on the three levels (micro-, meso-, macro-) of argumentation analysis. The Action will capitalise on existing but unfinished efforts to: integrate the theory of argument schemes, and in particular the scheme of practical argumentation (defined as argumentation about what should be done); advance research into argumentation patterns in public policy; systematise the study of procedures and designs for multi-party argumentation (*polylogues*).
   b. Integrated study of the descriptive, normative and prescriptive approaches to argumentation. This will be done by utilising new methods of linguistic analysis in a polylogue, scrutinising the normative underpinnings (values, decision rules) of practical reason and working towards design perspective in institutional argumentation.
3) Methodical data collection and analysis: while benefitting from the dominant theoretical and normative discussions in argumentation theory, this Action will be heavily data-driven, with a user-friendly, multi-language database of European public policy argumentation being its research basis and a crucial outcome.
4) Systematic connection to the professional policymaking community, stakeholders such as NGOs and SMEs, as well as European citizens. Extant research is almost exclusively confined to academia (both in terms of research and training). The Action will close this gap by directly engaging with non-academic groups within the professional community and civil society.
5) Creation of better argumentation protocols for decision-making together with professional policymakers and stakeholders.

1.4. ADDED VALUE OF NETWORKING

1.4.1. IN RELATION TO THE CHALLENGE

The Action will build and sustain a network, which is precisely what participants need to coordinate their own perspectives and results, and hence elevate their research impact. Indeed, even for big-scale individual research projects this would otherwise remain impossible.

A number of past and ongoing projects across Europe investigate (mostly at a local/national level) some of the issues this Action identifies. These projects advance the field of argumentation studies, but the benefits of coordinated research are absent. For instance, there currently is no organised data sharing among research teams, also because of barriers with languages other than English. This stifles efforts at systematically comparing the state of argumentation and public policies across EU member states and in its headquarters in Brussels. Consequently, the much sought-for policy

impact or concerted research remains wanting. Moreover, the concepts and methods employed across European research groups on argumentation and public policy have remained largely disparate.

To bridge the gap, the Action will add the value of an interdisciplinary and transnational network focussing on a specific pan-European challenge. Various approaches to argumentation and policy studies will be systematically represented across the Action's three Working Groups. The crucial added value is a shared understanding that reaches across disciplines and has tangible deliverables (see Sect 3.1). One such concrete deliverable will be synergies not only within the academic community, but, crucially, between European decision-makers, researchers and citizens.

1.4.2.   IN RELATION TO EXISTING EFFORTS AT EUROPEAN AND/OR INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

Examples of major international (Europe-based) initiatives are the conferences of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation (ISSA) held every four years, and the recently founded European Conference on Argumentation (ECA) held every two years. These events engage an international network of scholars and professionals. But their objectives are limited in scope, pertaining to scholarly exchange and networking. Understandably, they feature neither alignment of research results, nor sustained knowledge-exchange. By contrast, these are the objectives of the Action.

To the best of our knowledge, a similar European project dedicated to argumentation analysis has not been part of either Horizon 2020 or any previous Framework Programs, including the COST Actions. This makes this Action all the more original and needed. There exist, however, successful projects which include argumentation analysis in the context of EU policymaking as part of their bigger agenda, but without the much-needed methodological consolidation or systematic data collection and sharing. Current Horizon 2020 project "Between the Representation of the Crisis and the Crisis of Representation" (no. 649436; 2015-2018) investigates how social identities impact policymaking in post-crisis Europe. Part of this overarching task is to investigate the structures of reasoning of European citizens – and a local study of citizens' arguments for and against Arab integration has been conducted. Past COST Action IC0801 "Agreement Technologies" (2008-2012) featured one Working Group dedicated to "Argumentation and Negotiation." It explored the application of argumentation-based models of reasoning to dialogues from a logic-based, computer science perspective. By contrast, the APPLY Action adds social science and humanities methods and concepts to such endeavours. Similarly, past projects "EuroPolis: A deliberative Polity-Making Project" (FP7: 225314, 2008-2010) and "Ethics in Public Policy Making: The Case of Human Enhancement" (FP7: 266660, 2010-2012) investigated policymaking from the perspective of deliberation theory in political science and applied ethics in philosophy, respectively. But there was no systematic attention to argumentation.

Similarly, a number of International and European research projects treat climate change and energy policies, e.g. COST Action CA16229: "European Network for Environmental Citizenship" (2017-2021) with its stress on critical thinking education through argumentation; or COST Action IS1101: "Climate Change and Migration: Knowledge, Law and Policy and Theory" (2011-2015), with the aim to inform national and international policy dialogue. But these efforts again did not directly focus on argumentation.

By contrast, an ongoing (2017-2019) European project focussing on argumentation is "Ecological Reasoning and Decision Making in Innovation-Oriented Industry Sectors at the Periphery of Europe: Reconciling Divergent Values and Interests," co-sponsored by the Turkish (TUBITAK) and Portuguese (FCT) Science Foundations (TUBITAK/0010/2014). It investigates cultural, political and practical aspects of values and reasoning-patterns employed by major industry actors involved in a transition to a low-carbon economy. The project uses data collected in face-to-face interviews. Significant attention to argumentation is also given in the ongoing international but nationally funded research project "Evidence, Causation & Argumentation" (grant of the Finnish Cultural Foundation, 2015-2018). This project explores the notion of evidence-based policy and discusses the role of experts in the translation of scientific evidence into policy advice through argumentation.

As for graduate training, a good example is the international PhD programme "Argupolis: Argumentative Practices in Context" (2009-2015), organised by Swiss, Dutch and Portuguese universities and sponsored by the Swiss National Science Foundation. It successfully mixed students graduated from this programme who participated in summer/winter schools and other courses. This Action will extend this formula by offering international training schools on argumentation in public policy context, attracting students from various disciplines in the social sciences and humanities.

2. IMPACT

2.1. EXPECTED IMPACT

2.1.1. SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND/OR SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS

The Action will create new and strengthen existing links between (i) European researchers studying public policy argumentation, (ii) policymakers who rely on argumentation to support policy proposals, and (iii) members of the public who are subject to both. The Action will generate short- and long-term impacts for all these parties, but especially for researchers in Inclusiveness Target Countries and the Early Career Investigators.

The Action will generate the following short-term scientific impacts, with societal and policy impacts increasing as the Action develops.
- An annotated pan-European database on argumentation from institutional and citizens' discourse
- Significant progress towards a unified theoretical and methodological framework for analysing and evaluating argumentation across social sciences and humanities
- Greater visibility of argumentation studies and greater importance of public discourse as an object of study within the scholarly community
- Knowledge transfer: a) between scholars at different career stages (esp. established scholars, ECIs, and PhDs); b) across European countries, esp. in the North and South of Europe, the USA and Canada; c) between disciplinary approaches to argumentation (being so far rather compartmentalised by extant research programs and methods)
- Publications in the best academic journals, highlighting common goals, methods, and study-objects of the COST network
- 11 widely advertised 2-3 day workshops, and 2 large international conferences (3-4 days) at the end of years 2 and 4
- Teaching materials for advanced graduate-level learning; these will be based on the converging research agenda and materials and tested during the summer schools.

Rather than technological ones, the Action will have the following short-term socio-economic and policy impacts:
- Engagement of EU institutions, NGOs, enterprises and stakeholders at the local, regional, national, the European levels and internationally. Network members have various existing contacts in these areas from earlier and ongoing projects; new ones will be added
- Dissemination of empirical and theoretical results among stakeholders
- Training materials for EU institutions and NGOs that assist in analysing, evaluating and producing argumentation in public policy debates
- Delineation of 'counter-populist' argumentation practices for public dissemination to help citizens critically identify fallacious argumentation and populist rhetoric
- STSMs and training schools that increase academic skills and strengthen the networking capacity of ECIs and graduate students, enhancing employability within and beyond academia.

As long-term scientific impacts, the Action will generate:
- A unified research agenda on argumentation and public policy (comprising shared research questions, hypotheses, data collection and analysis) and a broader theoretical framework grounded in argumentation
- An integral place for the study of argumentative discourse within research on democratic legitimacy and populism
- Published results in edited volumes and top-tier peer-reviewed journal articles
- The capacity to guide future innovative research, thanks to a common scientific framework, coordinated research, and pan-European dissemination
- The global leadership of the European Research Area in argumentation and public policy analysis.

As long-term socio-economic and policy impacts, the Action will:
- Inform public policy procedures and outcomes by developing a framework for engaging academics with institutional decision-makers and European citizens
- Promote the study of argumentation and critical thinking in the teaching curriculum
- Raise political and social awareness of argumentation in public policymaking

- Improve the quality of citizens' decisions providing tools for well-informed debate
- Endorse improved protocols and procedures in terms of decision-making efficacy and legitimacy
- Contribute towards the targets set in the white papers for the future of EU; these include wider citizen engagement through dialogue, debate and education, thus addressing the problems of legitimacy and rationality of public policymaking.

2.2. MEASURES TO MAXIMISE IMPACT

2.2.1. PLAN FOR INVOLVING THE MOST RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

The Action will engage four stakeholder groups:

1. Researchers and scholars from universities and research institutes from Europe and beyond (Near Neighbouring Countries, International Partner Countries). Many of those involved in the network at the time of application are internationally recognised experts in the field of argumentation studies. Since most have already established links to stakeholder groups, the involvement of other stakeholders will develop from this core-group. The Action will significantly strengthen connections among them and engage new members as official partners who are active or interested in research on argumentation. (For the first 12 months the Action will remain open for new members; criteria for partner engagement will be stipulated by the MC.)
2. Policymakers at the EU, national and local level.
    - EU level: the European Commission's Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA); the European Environment Agency; and the European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI). These bodies are crucial because they formulate, inform, and implement EU policies and strategies on the fundamental issue of climate change, conduct international negotiations on climate, and engage European citizens.
    - National: public officials at ministerial level; ministers from the Education and Higher Education and Research Ministries. Engaging these bodies is crucial to impact the future development of argumentation and critical thinking skills across school and university curricula.
    - Local: municipal officials, as those "closest" to citizens.
3. NGOs, citizen and professional associations (e.g., the International Debate Education Association), grass-roots movements, policymaking think-tanks (e.g., *foraus* in Switzerland).
4. Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) as providers of commercial services related to argumentation, including *The Reasoning Lab* (Critical Thinking B.V.), and *De Argumentenfabriek* ("The Argumentation Factory"), who provide tools to visualise argumentation and decision-making processes used in the government and business sectors.

The involvement of stakeholders will be managed by the Action's dedicated Stakeholder Coordinator and implemented in the following way:
- Based on existing and new contacts and given the tasks of the WGs, in years 1 and 2 the Action will identify and contact the most appropriate stakeholders to involve in year 3 and 4.
- The MC, via the Stakeholder Coordinator, will establish communication with members of selected stakeholders groups 2, 3 and 4, inviting them to participate in the Action.
- An open access online platform disseminating the Action's activities will also facilitate involving further relevant stakeholders.
- Stakeholders will participate in the international conference at the end of year 2, featuring dedicated sessions on sharing expertise, identifying mutual challenges and needs, and familiarising stakeholders with basic methods and early results of the Action.
- In years 3-4, stakeholders will cooperate in the Action via interactive workshops and seminars as well as training schools. Methods for stakeholder discussion and decision-making, such as the Nominal Group Technique and Delphi process, will be used for full stakeholder engagement and efficient solution seeking. These will lead to joint reports and data-sharing, thus contributing to the Action's prescriptive aim: a streamlined argumentative model for policy-making.

Stakeholders will be treated as peers in knowledge and expertise, rather than mere "end-users."

2.2.2. DISSEMINATION AND/OR EXPLOITATION PLAN

The Action will create a network with impact reaching beyond the scientific community. Dissemination activities therefore involve a variety of stakeholders. Also, the media and the general public are crucial to achieving its objectives. The Action's dissemination and communication strategy will be supervised by the Action's Dissemination Coordinator (a member of the MC). The Action will have a consistent

graphical identity (logo, font, etc.), used across activities. An interactive state-of-the-art website will serve as the major dissemination hub (hosting information on objectives, WGs, news and events, database of public argumentation).

As dissemination activities primarily for the scientific community, Network members will:
- Send regular announcements regarding its activities (conferences, workshops, training schools, publications, reports) to international mailing lists, newsletters and social media platforms (e.g., the ArgThy list and Facebook Group, European Conference on Argumentation Facebook, LinkedIn group Argumentation Theory, PHILOS-L list for philosophers, CADAAD for discourse analysts, etc.)
- Participate in international workshops and conferences (hosted by related communities) and present the Action's activities and results
- Organise 2 symposia: one at the European Conference on Argumentation (2021) and one with the Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation (2022)
- Organise two major international conferences at the end of the 2nd and 4th year of the Action
- Organise 11 workshops throughout the Action's operation
- Produce an edited volume containing academic achievements of the Action
- Produce peer-reviewed papers and/or special journal issues

For the wider stakeholder community, the general public and the media, the Action will:
- Produce promotional materials, including: a poster; Action leaflets on the Action's mission, objectives, methods, its WGs, the STSM programme; a PowerPoint/pdf presentation;
- Actively engage stakeholders by inviting them to workshops and WG3 meeting
- Create a dedicated "Stakeholder" sub-website
- Produce 4 annual reports (for lay audience) distributed with local and national media
- Create a dedicated "Citizen" sub-website
- Organise at least one public decision-making event such as a citizens' panel

These communication channels and tools serve to share and promote the Action's activities and results with researchers, stakeholders, and citizens, and contribute to the visibility of COST actions.

2.3. POTENTIAL FOR INNOVATION VERSUS RISK LEVEL

2.3.1. POTENTIAL FOR SCIENTIFIC, TECHNOLOGICAL AND/OR SOCIOECONOMIC INNOVATION BREAKTHROUGHS

The Action's potential for scientific and socioeconomic innovation breakthroughs is considerably high. The network of participants has already critical mass to push the field of argumentation and public policy analysis forward in new pioneering directions – and it will keep growing. The Action will develop new concepts, methods, and metrics for analysis. It will also generate an important database of public arguments in the EU on the local, national and EU levels. New forms of cooperation between academics, policymakers and stakeholders will be implemented. Original protocols for conducting public argumentation will be developed. All these taken together will bring Europe to the forefront of argumentation and public policy analysis and will reap direct short-term and long-term benefits: better (more reasonable, legitimate) public policymaking being one such crucial benefit.

At the same time, the objectives and tasks of the Action are reasonably set, are measurable and achievable. Efficient network management and monitoring (see 3.1.4, 3.2 and 3.3 below) will minimise most potential risks with regards to scientific or administrative issues or inefficiencies. Risks internal to the Action include cultural and disciplinary differences among participants, and their varied experience, potentially affecting both research and administrative procedures. These, however, are expected to appear in any such comprehensive international network and can be systematically addressed. Risks external to the Action include major political and economic crises, e.g., in the wake of the actual Brexit in March 2019. In such cases, plans will be revised by the MC in coordination with the COST Association, but without affecting the Action's chief objectives and tasks. Overall, the return on investment in the Action is very high to the EU states, while risks are low and manageable.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

3.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK PLAN

3.1.1. DESCRIPTION OF WORKING GROUPS

The Action comprises 3 Working Groups:
> **WG1**: Empirical Study of Public Argumentation
> **WG2**: Norms of Public Argument: Concepts and Methods
> **WG3**: Designing Public Argumentation and Policymaking

The Action's main objective is to identify and treat the "three gaps" (described under 1.1). This will occur in close collaboration between the WGs, each of which will be primarily responsible for the empirical, the normative and the prescriptive aspect. The results of each WG will thus align to a common objective.

WG1: The primary objective is argumentative analysis of EU documents and procedures, the media, and citizens' discourse. This objective will be achieved as follows:
- Identify data and corpora on public argumentation around EU (year 1)
- Map three crucial areas of data-collection: policymaking, other stakeholders (NGOs, business), EU citizens' discourse (year 1)
- Map available data-collection methods: from online document mining to media analysis and face-to-face interviews (year 2)
- Collect data into a database (year 2-3)
- Continuously update database and keep contents available online (year 3)
- Annotate the database using a common argument reconstruction method (year 3-4)
- Evaluate arguments using a common argument evaluation method (year 3-4)
- Engage with WG2 and WG3 to systematically gauge the three gaps (years 1-4)

Major Deliverables of WG1 (see Table 1 under D1):
- A state-of-the-art report on the data available on EU public argumentation (D1-1)
- 2 workshops on sources and methods of analysing public argumentation and policymaking (D1-2)
- 2 training schools in methods of argument analysis and evaluation in political contexts (D1-3)
- Freely available, updated online database of public argumentation (D1-4)
- Papers in scientific journals on the above (D1-5)

WG2: The primary objective is a normative investigation of concepts and methods to measure the quality of arguments in public policies. WG2 will engage in the following activities:
- Survey the concepts of "good arguments" (valid, sound, reasonable, legitimate) in the public and policy sphere (year 1)
- Identify research gaps, future needs and perspectives (year 1)
- Integrate the macro-, meso-, and micro- level dimensions of public argument (years 1-2)
- Investigate the role of practical reasoning in public policy (year 2)
- Develop new paradigms and metrics for evaluating public arguments (years 2-3)
- Make these results ready for use by other WGs (year 2-4)
- Engage with WG1 and WG3 to gauge the three gaps (years 1-4)

Major Deliverables of WG2 (see Table 1 under D2):
- Position papers on research gaps, future research needs and novel perspectives (D2-1)
- 3 workshops on basic concepts and sources of normativity of public argument (D2-2)
- 2 training schools on normative concerns of public argument (D2-3)
- A state-of-the-art peer review paper on the rationality of public argument in a major international journal (preferably open access) (D2-4)
- Papers in scientific journals on concepts and sources of normativity of public argument (D2-5)

WG3: The primary objective of WG3 is the development of prescriptive tools for participants in public controversies to engage in well-informed and well-considered discussions. To this end, WG3 will:
- Review extant concepts and resources to design public argument and policymaking (year 1)
- Map expertise and resources of stakeholders in public policies and arguments (year 1)
- Engage with selected stakeholders (years 1-2)

- Directly engage stakeholders to identify good examples and best practices in stakeholders' public argumentation (years 2-4)
- Directly engage stakeholders to identify gaps and challenges in stakeholders' public argumentation (years 2-4)
- Use methods such as the Nominal Group Technique and Delphi process for stakeholder discussion and decision-making (years 3-4)
- Propose new forms of public argumentation (year 3)
- Discuss and test these forms with stakeholders (year 4)
- Engage with WG1 and WG2 to systematically gauge the three gaps (years 1-4)

Major Deliverables of WG3 (see Table 1 under D3):
- 1 workshop on basic resources and methods for designing public argumentation (D3-1)
- Report on basic resources and methods for designing public argumentation (D3-2)
- 3 workshops with stakeholders on challenges/needs of public argumentation (D3-3)
- Report on good examples and best practices in stakeholders' public argumentation (D3-4)
- Design of guidelines to improve public argumentation and treat the three gaps (D3-5)
- A new design for conducting public argumentation (D3-6)

Joint deliverables resulting from coordination between the 3 WGs are (see Table 1 under DC):
- The Action's interactive website (DC-1)
- A flyer describing the Action and its activities, methodology, objectives and results (DC-2)
- A biannual newsletter (DC-3)
- 4 annual reports (for lay audience) distributed with local and national media (DC-4)
- 2 symposia: one collocated with the European Conference on Argumentation (2021) and one with the Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation (2022) (DC-5).
- Two open international conferences with international participation (DC-6)
- Short Term Scientific Missions (STSM) (DC-7)
- An edited volume containing academic achievements of the Action (DC-8)

The Action Milestones (see Table 2) are determined in accordance with the work plan, the management strategy, and the general COST Rules and Guidelines.

3.1.2. GANTT DIAGRAM

Table 1: Deliverables

	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
D1-1				x												
D1-2				x				x								
D1-3											x				x	
D1-4					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
D1-5								x				x				x
D2-1				x				x								
D2-2		x				x				x						
D2-3					x									x		
D2-4								x								
D2-5												x				x

D3-1			x													
D3-2					x											
D3-3							x		x				x			
D3-4											x					
D3-5												x				
D3-6																x
DC-1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
DC-2	x												x			
DC-3	x		x		x		x		x		x		x			x
DC-4			x				x				x					x
DC-5									x				x			
DC-6							x									x
DC-7		x	x				x	x	x	x			x	x		
DC-8																x

Table 2: Milestones

	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Kick-off meeting	x															
Website ready		x														
MC meeting		x		x		x		x		x		x		x		x
WG1 meeting		x		x		x		x		x		x		x		x
WG2 meeting		x		x		x		x		x		x		x		x
WG3 meeting		x		x		x		x		x		x		x		x
International conference								x								x
WG1 workshop			x					x								
WG2 workshop		x				x				x						
WG3 & stakeholder workshop				x				x		x				x		

12

General workshop									X				X		
STSM		X	X			X	X	X	X			X	X		
Training school				X				X		X				X	
Progress report			X				X								
Final report															X

3.1.3. PERT CHART (OPTIONAL)

3.1.4. RISK AND CONTINGENCY PLANS

The Action will constantly self-monitor its activities. Working Group leaders and Action Coordinators (see 3.2) will prepare biannual progress reports, identifying problems and difficulties, and activity plans, detailing potential risks. Reports will be evaluated during MC meetings, where best solutions and contingency plans will be coined. The Action will implement efficient management (see 3.2) under the oversight of the MC and coordinators. Especially the Activity Network Coordinator (reporting to the MC) will be overseeing the balanced composition and network structure, so that results are genuinely collaborative and a network node can be easily compensated for. Should any participant have to leave the Action: 1) All members in leadership positions (MC members, WG leaders, coordinators, and representatives) will have a nominated substitute to take up a delayed or abandoned task; 2) Another Action member will take over these tasks (based on MC's decision); 3) A new participant with similar knowledge and skill-set can be invited to the Action (upon the MC's decision). The MC will also see to it that invited participants work in local research or organisational groups, thus allowing for local distribution of tasks and seamless succession (if needed), while retaining responsibility of the participant. Participants who underperform or display lack of commitment will be first reminded by WG leaders or the MC of ways to improve (including limiting tasks, changing them, or suggesting novel ways of collaboration). If this does not succeed, procedures similar to a missing participant will implemented. A possible lack of involvement by stakeholders will be dealt with via efficient communication and stakeholder engagement strategy (see 2.2) managed by a dedicated Stakeholder Coordinator.

Where theoretical and methodological differences among Action members arise, these will be solved in WGs' meetings and workshops. Where they persist, discussion resolution or attenuation by the MC ensues. The MC can invite external experts to adjudicate on persisting disagreements.

Intellectual Property Rights issues will be discussed and solved by the MC, in compliance with COST 134/14 B.2. "COST Action Management, Monitoring and Final Assessment", Annex I, Art. 6.

3.2. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES

The Action will organise its activities in full compliance with the "COST Rules for Participation in and Implementation of COST Activities" and the "COST Vademecum".

The Action Management Committee (MC) will be responsible for coordinating and managing activities, especially implementation of tasks and achieving objectives. The MC will be responsible for approving the Annual Work and Budget Plan. At the first meeting, the MC will elect the Action Chair (responsible for coordinating the Action and MC activities) and the Action Vice-Chair. The following additional positions will be elected during the meeting, or soon thereafter: three WGs leaders, STSM Coordinator, Conference and Workshop Coordinator, ECI and Training School Coordinator, Dissemination Coordinator, Stakeholder Coordinator, and the EUAction Network Coordinator. Positions may be combined and/or held by the same person. Where needed, other leadership positions may be added as the Action develops. Each leader or coordinator oversees their respective tasks and objectives both in scientific and administrative terms. The Action Network Coordinator uses social network analysis methods to monitor and report on the Action network. The Scientific Representative of the Grant Holder is an active member of the MC, responsible for the scientific progress of the Action. At least two of these key positions are reserved to a representative of a COST Inclusiveness Target Country, and at least two to an Early Career Investigator. During each MC meeting, leaders and coordinators (including the Scientific Representative) will report on progress in their respective portfolio and present an activity plan for the next six months. Reports and plans will be evaluated and approved, or modified, or rejected, by

the MC. Based on reports, the MC will produce progress reports at months 12 and 24 (using COST templates). These will constitute the basis for monitoring the Action.

The Action will optimise performance through new technologies such as video conferencing, e-voting and collaborative online writing, employing commercial and open source services provided by its members' host institutions. Online meeting and voting will take place as needed (decided by the Action Chair). The MC will regularly meet offline twice a year for the Action's duration. Meetings will be collocated with WGs meetings or workshops/conferences to limit travel. This will allow for smooth coordination and knowledge sharing between the three WGs, and also the WGs and the MC.

Decision-making procedures rely on sound argumentation aimed at achieving reasoned consensus between partners. All votes of the MC will be by simple majority-rule, subsequent to discussion among a quorum of two-thirds of the MC members. Each MC member will have an officially appointed substitute, standing-in for the MC member in case of anticipated absence. Substitutes will act as deputy-coordinators in their area (e.g., a deputy STSM Coordinator) to avoid delays and absences.

3.3. NETWORK AS A WHOLE

The Action will take full advantage of the COST programme as a networking tool among European and International researchers and stakeholders. Benefitting from the participation of social scientists (esp. communication scholars), it will apply social network analysis tools (Kadushin, 2012) to map, manage and self-monitor the functioning of the network. This task will be supervised by a dedicated Action Network Coordinator capable of providing professional network analysis over the Action's lifetime.

The network includes partners from Europe and IPCs excelling in argumentation studies (e.g. USA and Canada). Thanks to its interdisciplinary set-up, the network can fulfil the Action's main objectives: Linguists, discourse analysts and social psychologists will provide systematically collected data; philosophers and legal scholars will investigate the standards of rationality in public argument; communication scholars together with EU as well as national and local stakeholders will design better ways of conducting public arguments. The network will also connect researchers at various career stages, allowing ECIs to strengthen their expertise across an expanding network.

All the same, the Action's network as a whole is built on expansion. To meet the Action's challenges, the network must grow, taking into account basic principles for well-functioning, democratic networks. These include: promoting high density and low distance, that is, building as many direct links among participants as possible; avoiding structural holes (where some partners would never develop a link) by carefully constructing scientific and administrative bridges; monitoring the centrality of network nodes, so that a single participant cannot dominate the network's operation.