

# Reasons, Citizens and Institutions

## International Conference on Argumentation and Public Policy (APPLY 2020)

4-6 March 2020

University of Wrocław, Poland

### Confirmed Keynote Speakers

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Sven Ove Hansson

Department of Philosophy and History  
Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden

Anabela Carvalho

Department of Communication Sciences  
University of Minho, Braga, Portugal

### The Call

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In line with the objectives of [COST Action CA17132, The European Network for Argumentation and Public Policy Analysis \(APPLY\)](#), this conference's primary goal is to investigate the ways citizens, policymakers and scholarly experts understand, evaluate and contribute to policy-making processes on topics such as climate change, energy, migration, or health. Across these fundamental societal issues, the conference focuses on the unifying aspect of any public debate and policy: the pro and con reasons that are invariably articulated in public argumentation.

While argumentation has consistently been considered crucial for policy making—as a quality-control tool that captures both the rationality and legitimacy of public decisions (e.g., Dryzek & Pickering, 2019; Hansson & Hirsch Hadorn, 2016)—it is clear that much public argumentation is at odds with the ideal forms of rationality defined in deliberative, dialectical, or decision-theoretic models. Moreover, citizens, institutions and experts often misunderstand or disagree with each other as to which epistemic or practical arguments are sound, cogent or persuasive enough to guide our choices. The ambition of the conference is to address these problems on theoretical, empirical, and practical levels: to examine how to conceptualize such disagreements, how to identify

them, and how to respond to them. The conference's working hypothesis to be investigated is that public uses of language are key to these gaps and disagreements.

Accordingly, the conference invites researchers in philosophy, linguistics, legal and political theory, communication, psychology, computer science, as well as policy professionals and other stakeholders instrumental in public policymaking, to explore the complex relations between reasons, citizens and institutions in the context of public policymaking. Some of the following descriptive, normative and prescriptive questions are to be addressed (a non-exhaustive list!):

- What kinds of arguments are used on public issues: where, when, by whom?
- What are their main descriptive features?
- Are there systematic differences between the arguments of politicians, bureaucrats, experts, entrepreneurs, and activists—and the arguments of “common people”?
- More generally: what are the unique characteristics of and relations between the public sphere, the policy sphere, the technical sphere and the legal sphere of argument?
- To what extent are public arguments persuasive? Who is more willing to accept them?
- To what extent are public arguments “good”: logically valid; ethically or epistemically acceptable, relevant and sufficient; dialectically sound; democratically legitimate?
- How to evaluate arguments and decision-making processes on highly disputable topics, in the face of the lack of knowledge and deep uncertainty?
- Which arguments and disagreements can be seen as directly addressing substantive issues and which as being meta-linguistic or procedural?
- What kind of procedures and protocols *do* we and *should* we follow in our public deliberations?
- What kind of reasoned intervention into legal frameworks, institutional infrastructures and technological tools can we imagine to better guide our deliberations?

## Submissions

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Please submit your abstract of 200-350 words through [our EasyChair platform](#) by December 31, 2019.

## Fees and funding

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There is no conference fee, but registration is obligatory.

A limited number of accepted participants from [the members states of the European CO-operation in Science and Technology](#) can be fully funded (travel, accommodation) following the [COST Association's rules for reimbursement](#) (see Section 5). When submitting your abstract, please indicate if you need such support. The decision will be based on the merits of the abstracts, but, in accordance with the COST principles, priority will be given to Early Career Investigators (PhD students and up to 8 years after defence), scholars whose primary affiliation is with institutions in the Inclusiveness Target Countries (see green countries [here](#)), and female scholars.

## Deadlines

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Submission of abstracts:	31 December 2019
Notification of acceptance:	15 January 2020
Registration:	31 January 2020
Conference:	4-6 March 2020

## Programme Committee

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Kjersti Fløttum (University of Bergen, Norway)  
Paweł Jabłoński (University of Wrocław, Poland)  
Marcin Lewiński (Nova University of Lisbon, Portugal)  
Maciej Pichlak (University of Wrocław, Poland)  
Sandrine Roginsky (Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium)

## Organizers

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Department of Legal Theory and Philosophy of Law, Faculty of Law, Administration and Economics, University of Wrocław, Poland  
Reasoning and Argumentation Lab (ArgLab), Nova Institute of Philosophy (IFILNOVA), Nova University of Lisbon, Portugal

## External links

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For more information about the conference, see [here](#)

The conference will be taking place at [the Faculty of Law, Administration and Economics](#)

For general information about Wrocław, see [here](#)