

SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION

BRIEF

Action number: ECOST-STSM-Request- CA17132-47670

STSM title: Normative and evaluative constructions in argumentation: theoretical and empirical perspectives

STSM start and end date: 2021/01/18 – 2021/03/14

Grantee name: Dr Isidora Stojanovic

Home institution: Institut Jean-Nicod, Paris, FR

Host Institution: Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, ES

Research interest:

Isidora Stojanovic is a senior researcher at the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (France) and a member of WG2: Norms of Public Argument: Concepts and Methods. She works at the interface of philosophy and linguistics. Her current research focuses on value judgments and evaluative discourse and language. The project carried out in the STSM will contribute to one of WG2's core aims: that of understanding, analysing and evaluating argumentation in public policy contexts.

STSM Summary:

This STSM made it possible for the grantee to carry out a research project in collaboration with the host group, namely, the Formal Linguistics Group (GLiF) at UPF. The projects brought together research done in natural language semantics, philosophy, and theory of argumentation. It focused on two types of constructions that frequently occur in argumentative discourse of all types (laymen's, media's, political, scientific): normative (aka deontic) constructions, such as deontic auxiliaries 'ought' and 'may'; and evaluative constructions, such as the adjectives 'good' and 'bad'. Typically, public policies issue prescriptions; they regulate how citizens and institutions ought to behave. When proposing new policies, or modifications to existing ones, the argumentation typically takes the form of an argument with normative force, one with a deontic conclusion. The research carried out in the STSM has made a significant advance in understanding the conditions under which such a deontic conclusion may be reached, as well as the role that evaluative expressions play in the argumentation. It showed that

evaluatives and deontics behave asymmetrically in argumentation: while arguments with evaluative premises and deontic conclusions can be perfectly sound, arguments with deontic premises and evaluative conclusions seem odd. This asymmetry was investigated through a combination of theoretical and experimental methodology. A corpus study was undertaken in view to examine how speakers use evaluative adjectives in argumentation, focusing principally on whether and how often they embed them under epistemic or related attitude predicates, such as 'know', 'believe', 'consider' and 'find'. Two research articles presenting the project's main results are under way.