Report on the outcomes of a Short-Term Scientific Mission[[1]](#footnote-1)

Action number: CA17132 – APPLY, European Network for Argumentation and Public Policy Analysis

Grantee name: FABIO PAGLIERI

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| **Details of the STSM**  Title: SOCIO-COGNITIVE BOUNDARIES OF GOOD PUBLIC ARGUMENTS  Start and end date: 03/02/2023 to 19/02/2023 |
| **Description of the work carried out during the STSM**  Description of the activities carried out during the STSM. Any deviations from the initial working plan shall also be described in this section. |
| *(max. 500 words)*  The activities carried out during this STSM followed the working plan outlined in the initial proposal, designed to achieve the overall aims of the STSM. Building on their previous collaboration, including the publication of a high-profile joint paper (Mercier et al., 2017), the grantee, Fabio Paglieri, and the host, Hugo Mercier, leveraged this STSM to revamp their cooperation and to focus it on matters of interest for the APPLY action: in particular, *under what socio-cognitive conditions can public argument be expected to be fruitful (and in what sense), and how can these criteria be turned into design constraints and guidelines*, in order to foster better public debate in society? The activities conducted during this STSM capitalized on the wealth of shared interests between grantee and host, with a twofold aim: on the one hand, lay down the groundwork for *a joint theoretical paper on the socio-cognitive boundaries of good public argument*, including a principled definition of what “good” means in this context and an assessment of the feasibility of such boundaries in real-life public discourse; on the other hand, design and prepare the preliminary materials for *a joint experimental study on the impact of different educational treatments of fallacies on argument assessment skills*, to be carried out in the months immediately after this STSM.  To realize this ambitious program, the applicant and the host agreed beforehand on a time-intensive schedule of meetings, in order to be able to work together on a regular basis. Office space was provided for the applicant nearby the host own office, thus facilitating both formal and informal meetings. Efforts were made to ensure that this STSM also acts as a catalyst to increase interest in the APPLY action in the broader research community at the host institution, thanks to the presence of several key scholars of the Institut Jean-Nicod (e.g., Dan Sperber, Nicolas baumard, Olivier Morin, Isidora Stojanovic, Joelle Proust, Brent Strickland, Gloria Origgi, Roberto Casati, François Recanati) interested in further discussing the role of argumentation in public debate.  In particular, as planned, the first week (04-11/02/2023) was dedicated to initial brainstorming between the grantee and the host, in order to define the key issues for the theoretical paper and the relevant variables for the empirical study. Then, the second week (12-18/02/2023) was devoted to in-depth joint work, fine-tuning the design of the experiment and preparing a first draft of the experimental materials, as well as outlining the scope of the theoretical paper and assigning preliminary writing responsibilities. This will allow to use the work done during this STSM as the foundations of the subsequent collaboration between grantee and host on these two research projects. |
| **Description of the STSM main achievements and planned follow-up activities**  Description and assessment of whether the STSM achieved its planned goals and expected outcomes, including specific contribution to Action objective and deliverables, or publications resulting from the STSM. Agreed plans for future follow-up collaborations shall also be described in this section.  *(max. 500 words)*  All key objectives of this STSM, as outlined in the initial application, were successfully achieved, as follows:  1) Advances in the treatment of the three gaps identified by the APPLY action between the citizens’, policymakers’ and scholarly experts’ argumentation, with special emphasis on the prescriptive mission: i.e., developing tools by which policymakers, citizens and various stakeholders engage in well-informed argumentative discussions. A principled list of socio-cognitive boundaries for high-quality public debate, which constitutes one of the key outcomes of this STSM, will be instrumental to the achievement of that goal.  (2) Actionable insights for European policymakers and citizens on how to structure more productive public debates using digital technologies, consistently with the deliverables expected from WG3 (of which the grantee is chair) in GP5 and as an integral part of those reports.  (3) Further consolidation of the currently dispersed argumentation scholarship across Europe and beyond, with significant steps made to increase the involvement of the thriving, multidisciplinary IJN community into this area of research, helped by the fact that the host and another IJN researcher, Isidora Stojanovic, are already APPLY members.  (4) Strengthening of the experimental dimension of the APPLY action, via collection of novel and relevant data on the measurable impact of different educational practices to improve public debate via better argument assessment.  (5) Strengthening of the integration among the three main lines of research developed by the APPLY action, i.e., empirical (WG1), normative (WG2), and prescriptive (WG3), since the proposed workplan for this STSM naturally cuts across all three areas.  (6) Facilitating the involvement of the host, as well as other relevant IJN researchers, in possible follow-ups of the APPLY action, e.g., the preparation of a COST Innovator Grant under the current call.  (7) Further dissemination of the APPLY results to a broad and active multidisciplinary community at the IJN, which will prove to be particularly beneficial at this time, i.e., when the action is about to be concluded and thus knowledge transfer becomes especially crucial.  Future follow-ups, to bring to further fruition this STSM, will include, besides the current report, the following steps:  (i) Dissemination of the STSM results at the APPLY final conference in Lisbon, 23-24 March 2023  (ii) Data collection/analysis for the experiment and first draft of the theoretical paper (March-July 2023)  (iii) First draft of the experimental paper (August-October 2023)  (iv) Publication of the two papers (expected in late 2023 / early 2024) |

1. This report is submitted by the grantee to the Action MC for approval and for claiming payment of the awarded grant. The Grant Awarding Coordinator coordinates the evaluation of this report on behalf of the Action MC and instructs the GH for payment of the Grant. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)