



Tübingen, 04. June 2019

Minutes of the Eighth Management Committee (MC)
and the Seventh Working Group (WG) Meeting
of COST Action CA15101 “Comparative Analysis of Conspiracy Theories”

Thursday, May 23, 2019, 9:45 to 10:30 a.m.

Universidad de Huelva, Facultad de Trabajo Social, Huelva, Spain

1. **Welcome by Action Chair**

The action chair opens the meeting at 9:55 a.m.

2. **Quorum Call**

Countries present at the meeting: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, fYR Macedonia

The quorum is reached.

3. **Adoption of the Agenda**

The Agenda (Annex 1) is officially adopted by the MC.

4. **Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting**

Correction of Dubrovnik MC Meeting Minutes (via e-Mail):

"Accepted/in press: Mari-Liis Madison and AndreasVentsel, *Conspiracy Theories & Information Operations: Strategies, Context and Function* [publication in March 2019]"

Corrected to: the **deadline of the manuscript is September 2019**

Otherwise the minutes are approved unanimously.

5. Status of the Action

Action Chair Peter Knight gives an update on the state of the Action:

1. Achieved objectives:
 - putting a spotlight on research in conspiracy theory by coordinating disparate studies into a coherent field of inquiry
 - creating dialogue and collaboration between scholars employing different methodologies
 - advance knowledge by enabling scholars to integrate findings that they have so far been unaware of because the research was conducted in an unfamiliar language
 - producing a comparative analysis of conspiracy theories that answers overarching and important questions
 - constructing new research questions and projects of transnational and transdisciplinary nature
 - sustaining the collaboration of its members beyond its lifetime
 - train a new generation of scholars in this area of inquiry
 - grant-holding university will provide funds to maintain the project website after the end of the Action
2. Still open objectives:
 - equipping the major stakeholders with robust knowledge and strategies to understand and counter accusations of conspiracy
 - close working relationships between academics and non-academics that will continue after the end of the Action
3. Achieved deliverables:
 - STSMs
 - Workshop with stakeholders
 - Website; e-newsletter
 - Literature review
 - Two international conferences (incl. stakeholders)
 - Training schools
 - New research projects (e.g. PiCOM)
 - Edited volume (NB podcast series)
4. Still open deliverables:
 - Teaching resources, sample syllabi, a database of experts, and recommendations for policy makers and journalists

6. Report by Grant Holder

The Grant Holder Michael Butter gives an update on the state of the action:

- Introduction of new Grant Manager Marina Pingler
- University of Tübingen will provide funds to hire research assistance for editing work over the summer of the handbook

7. Accepting New Members & Allocating Budget

1. Proposed decision on new Action members:
 - Accept as new Action members (applications in previously sent application file):

- Hugo Leal
- Stephen Armstrong
- Noa Vaisman
- Not accept as new Action member (application file):
 - Dmitry Zaitsev because it would mean accepting a new NNC and because he has no previous research on conspiracy theories

The decision was accepted unanimously.

2. Proposed decision on allocating action budget:

- Allocate left over budget from Huelva conference to fund a workshop hosted at Maynooth University, Ireland

Workshop Title: *Debunking Conspiracy Theories*

Date: June 28th, 2019

Workshop Venue: Maynooth University, Ireland

Local Organizer: Ela Drązkiewicz

Allocated Budget: 4.000€

Information by co-organizer Jaron Harambam: there had been an open call for papers, participants have been selected

The decision was accepted unanimously.

8. **Future Meetings**

- Public Action Conference:
Prague: 19-21 September, 2019
Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
- Stakeholder Workshop in March, 2020 in order to disseminate research results
Venue yet to be determined
- Final Educational Resources Workshop in March, 2020 in order to disseminate research results
Venue yet to be determined

9. **Any Other Business**

No other business.

10. **Action Publications**

The Action Chair gives an update on the Action's publications:

- 1) The Routledge Handbook on Conspiracy Theories in on track for its publication in March 2020.

- 2) The first book from the Monograph Series, *The Stigmatization of Conspiracy Theory since the 1950s* by Katharina Thalman, has been published.
- 3) The first book from the Short Book series, *Impossible Knowledge: Conspiracy Theories, Power, and Truth* by Todor Hristov, has also been published.
The second book from the Short Book series, *Conspiracy Theories in Turkey: Conspiracy Nation* by Doğan Gürpınar, will be published in June 2019.

11. **Closing**

The action chair closes the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

E-Votes / Written Procedure since the last MC Meeting in Dubrovnik:

January 6, 2019: Budget Amendment

- 1) A meeting in Copenhagen for the Scandinavian Action members, who are working on an edited volume on conspiracy theories in that region, on March 19, 2019 (7 participants). For this meeting we would like to allocate 4060€ from the leftover budget from the previous meetings and the training school this summer.
- 2) A meeting in Innsbruck on April 12, 2019 (9 participants) to start creating the educational material that are part of the general action goals for this grant period. For this meeting we would like to allocate 6120€ from the leftover budget from the previous meetings and the training school this summer.

The decision was accepted unanimously.

January 21, 2019: New Members and New IPC Institution

- 1) New Members: Michael Biddlestone, Ricky Green, Tova Höjdestrand
- 2) The University of Miami was approved as an IPC Institution