COST ACTION CA16215 – EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR THE PROMOTION OF PORTABLE, AFFORDABLE AND SIMPLE ANALYTICAL PLATFORMS

"Science knows no country, because knowledge belongs to humanity, and is the torch which illuminates the world."
Louis Pasteur (1822-1895), Chemist

Dear Members and Friends of the portASAP COST Action,

Today, I would like to use this space to reflect on the success and failures of the past year. We are now in the second year of this Action and the main MC meeting will be in a month.

The challenge of this Action is to promote low-cost instrumentation alongside commercial instruments for chemical analysis. In this respect, we have witnessed some good outcomes. In the workshop in Brno, we discussed portable and open-source capillary electrophoresis (OPCE) instruments. You can find some of the presentations on our new website(portasap.eu). The work was well received within and outside the Action, and we have been invited to organise a plenary session in the upcoming ITP2019 conference on this subject. For more in this area, I invite you to read the review published by Petr Kubáň.

This year has been good in disseminating of open source hardware (OSHW) in chemical analysis as we also have been invited to participate in the RAFA2019 (recent advances in food analysis). Support for those two conferences is being discussed in the CORE group and will be agreed during the MC meeting, but our participation will clearly facilitate dissemination of OSHW as chemical analysis tools. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of you that promoted this year the PortASAP Cost Action in conferences, seminars or informally.

Short-term scientific missions (STSMs) are very important instruments within COST Actions. They allow to share expertise and know-how between research groups and facilitate the establishment of long-lasting collaborations. Five STSMs were completed in 2018; you can see their output in the website, five more are scheduled within this grant period. However, the number of STSMs is still below what was agreed in the Porto MC meeting and some of the allocated funds have not been used. The COST Action will only succeed with your commitment and we should aim to improve participation in STSMs. I will be happy to discuss strategies in the next MC meeting.

The Core group and I wish you all and your families a Very Happy and Successful 2019!

Guillaume

Website and Social Media

The PortASAP website moved to its final address: portasap.eu and some information was updated. Together with the website, I will now use a new email for COST related information – guillaume(at)portasap.eu, please add it to your contacts to not having flagged as spam. Research Gate and Twitter (@COST_PortASAP) links were also added permitting the direct access to these social media from the web.

We strongly encourage you to use the PortASAP social media. This will benefit not only the action, but also will help you to spread out your own research, activities and interests.

MC meeting

The MC meeting in Varazdin is getting closer and a lot of you have been asking about hotel and transport from Zagreb to Varazdin. Dr Ivana Grcic, the local organiser and WG3 co-leader has just prepared an information sheet which has been sent by Dr Christian Degrigny, WG3 leader, together with the last version of the programme. A bus will be organised to take you to Varazdin. Please provide your flight information to Christian. Furthermore, a poster session will be held in parallel to coffee breaks and will be organised by Dr Asta Tvarijonaviciute.

1ST PortASAP Hackathon

As you may be aware, the COST association granted us an additional budget for this Grant Period. This budget will be used to organise our first hackathon on OSHW. The event will take place in Aveiro (Portugal), on the 11/03/2019 and 12/03/2019. The aim will be to develop spectrometers (smartphone, raspberry PI/CCD, for example) to analyse wine. At this point we don't aim for performance, but we would like to have a simple design that will allow gathering data for chemometrics analysis. I will send additional information later, but I am happy to share some preliminary ideas with anyone interested.

STSMs – Opening of the last call of the 2ND Grant Period

To try to use the remaining STSMs budget, an extra STSM call is now open. The call will run continuously until the end of the Grant Period, but for administrative reasons, STSMs will have to take place between the 10th of February and the 20th of March. I would also like to remind you of our STSM rules (http://portasap.eu/stsm-rules.html), in particular, 1. you should indicate the working group leader that will assess your application, 2. the budget needs to be justified and 3. after the STSM you will need to send a summary for publication of your work to the dissemination officer. All other rules apply.

Core group Vacancies

WG1: Validation and dissemination of open-source hardware. Dr Krisjanis Smits will step down as working group leader after the MC meeting for personal reasons.

ITC Grants Coordinator. This is a new position open by the COST Association. ITC grants are grants targeting early career researchers from inclusiveness target countries to help them attending international conferences. The Conference Grants Coordinator performs the evaluation of each Conference Grant application. The tasks include: evaluate applications, approve or reject these applications in e-cost, evaluate the scientific report after the mission, post-approve or reject the report.

We are looking for motivated MC members or substitutes to fill those two positions. Elected members will join the core group and have a better opportunity to shape the Actions. If you are interested, please send a small motivation letter to the Vice-chair. The letter should include your previous involvement in this Action or other COST Action. Candidates will be presented and elected in the next Varazdin MC meeting.

Preparation of the 3ʳᵈ Grant Period

The Varazdin MC meeting will be the occasion to pre-agree the activities for the next Grant Period. We have already received very interesting proposals, but if you would like to discuss some events, you should contact your Working Group Leader.

Core group Contacts

Chair: Dr Guillaume Erny - guillaume(at)portasap.eu

Vice-Chair: Dr Mercedes Vazquez - mercedes.vazquez(at)dcu.ie

STSM Coordinator: Dr Nuno Ratola – nrneto(at)fe.up.pt

Dissemination Officer: Dr Asta Tvarijonaviciute – asta(at)um.es

Working Group Leaders' Contacts:

WG1: Validation and dissemination of open-source hardware (Dr Krisjanis Smits - smits(at)cfi.lu.lv).

WG2: Information and communication technology and software development (Prof Massimo Panella - massimo.panella(at)uniroma1.it)

WG3: Field tests and applications (Dr Christian Degrigny - christian.degrigny(at)he-arc.ch)

WG4: Sample treatment and microfluidics (Prof Elefteria Psillakis - elia(at)enveng.tuc.gr)

WG5: New instrumentation (Prof Rita Asquini - rita.asquini(at)uniroma1.it)

WG6: Exploitation of results (Dr Lorena Vidal – lorena.vidal(at)ua.es)