

ESERA Early Career Researcher Travel Award 2023

Recipient: Dagmar Mercedes Heeg, Institute for Science Education and Communication (ISEC) at the University of Groningen, Netherlands

Host: Dr. Jahna Otterbacher, Cyprus Center for Algorithmic Transparency (CyCAT) at the Open University of Cyprus

Visit dates: 19th to 27th of October, 2023

To the ESERA President's Travel Award Committee, Board of Directors, and Early Career Researcher Travel Award Committee,

Through this letter, I wish to express my sincere gratitude for awarding me the Early Career Researcher Travel Award 2023. This grant afforded me the chance to undertake a research stay at the Cyprus Center for Algorithmic Transparency (CyCAT) at the Open University of Cyprus, spanning from the 19th to the 27th of October 2023. Reflecting on this research visit, I acknowledge it as a significant experience in my academic journey, contributing positively to my PhD trajectory. In this brief report of my visit, I will highlight the main opportunities I encountered during my time at CyCAT.

On the first day of my visit, dr. Otterbacher organized a research meeting with several researchers and educators interested in AI literacy. Maria Kasinidou, a current PhD student at CyCAT, provided a comprehensive overview of their AI literacy projects. She showcased AI literacy courses they had developed and shared insights from their ongoing research on the general public's perceptions of AI. Through her presentation, Maria shared new materials, tools, and methodologies for fostering AI literacy and introduced me to novel approaches to data collection. Moreover, I also had the opportunity to present my PhD research on AI literacy during this meeting. Due to the tranquil and open environment for my presentation, we had the opportunity to have an in-depth discussion that yielded constructive feedback and valuable suggestions, offering fresh perspectives on my work. Equipped with these fresh insights and suggestions, I am prepared



to implement substantial improvements to my ongoing research and incorporate them into the planning of my upcoming empirical study.

Beyond these presentations, I engaged in numerous informal discussions with Dr. Otterbacher's team, deepening my understanding of AI ethics, particularly in terms of fairness. The CyCAT team generously contributed their insights, brainstorming innovative ways to incorporate the concept of AI fairness into my materials and future research. Currently, I have integrated this concept into the design of public engagement materials that will form the foundation of an empirical paper. Additionally, the team members, who have published and participated in various conferences on AI literacy, shared valuable insights into the research field and recommended potential journals and conferences based on their experiences.

Finally, this research stay broadened my understanding of the academic landscape beyond my own geographical and cultural context. Visiting CyCAT provided me with an opportunity to explore other academic institutions, research teams, and gain insights into the academic working culture in Cyprus.

In summary, my research stay at CyCAT was an invaluable experience for which I extend my gratitude to Dr. Jahna Otterbacher for graciously hosting me. A special thanks to Maria, who played a crucial role in organizing this trip and introducing me to traditional foods of Cyprus. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude once again to the ESERA Travel Award Committee for providing me with this opportunity, which has undoubtedly enhanced both my PhD research and my trajectory as an academic researcher.

Best wishes,

Dagmar Mercedes Heeg
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