

Biography: Dr. Andrea Salfinger is currently an Erwin Schrödinger Fellow at the University of Udine, Italy, where she is pursuing her foundational research grant “Situational Context Representations” (SitCON) awarded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), investigating how assessed situations can be leveraged as context guiding the IF process. Her research interests focus on High-Level Information Fusion, soft fusion, computational situation assessment, situation tracking and situational context exploitation. Her work on these topics has been presented at various editions of the *FUSION* and the *IEEE Conference on Cognitive and Computational Aspects of Situation Management (CogSIMA)* series, in the Elsevier Information Fusion journal, and recognized with a Best Paper Award at CogSIMA 2015 and a Seal of Excellence by the European Commission on the Horizon MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2021 call. Andrea enjoys engaging with the international research community to promote scientific exchange, esp. by supporting the organization of scientific events: She has served as the Publicity Chair of *FUSION 2024* (Venice, Italy), and as Organizing Committee member of the ISIF-sponsored editions of *IEEE CogSIMA 2020, 2021, 2022, 2024* and *2025*, and is currently also serving as chair of the *IEEE Systems, Man and Cybernetics Society's Technical Committee on Cognitive Situation Management*.

Mission statement: Ever since attending my first FUSION conference in 2019, I have learned to truly appreciate the service that ISIF delivers to its members, offering a unified platform on information fusion research from low- to high-level IF. Communication channels like its freshly revamped website, its established publications, mailing list and social media presence keep its members up-to-date on the latest developments and offer a trusted information resource in a fast-paced scientific landscape. ISIF's well-established FUSION conference series provides an annual gathering which fosters community building and exchange, sparking novel ideas and catalyzing new research collaborations by meeting like-minded peers - of which I myself can serve as testimony, having met the host of my current researcher mobility grant for the first time when attending FUSION 2019 in Ottawa, besides many other fantastic colleagues leading to long-lasting cooperation and friendships.

Based on this personal experience, I am deeply convinced of the profound impact that communities like ISIF can have on their members' scientific and professional development. Scientific progress rarely flourishes in isolation - rather, it is propelled when fueled by the lively exchange within a vibrant research community, who provides us with "sparring partners" on novel ideas and a stimulating forum for discussing and refining our thoughts, and offering our young researchers a space to learn and grow. While the international scientific community clearly is separated in physical space – with our labs scattered across the globe – we stand together in our minds, united by the passion and love for our research field. It is exactly this "sense of belonging" that I believe a community like ISIF shall offer and nourish, a spirit which is created and transported by the mentioned communication channels and providing community meeting opportunities like ISIF's sponsored conferences.

In gratitude for what this community has offered me, I would be happy to serve ISIF's membership for the 2025-2027 term. We are fortunate to work in a challenging and rapidly advancing scientific field, with technologies and research communities constantly evolving. I believe that engaging with related scientific communities will be crucial to ensure a lively influx of new researchers and support the flow of ideas, coming myself originally from the ISIF-sponsored CogSIMA event series and having been introduced to FUSION by wonderful mentors active in both communities, ISIF and CogSIMA. We see core IF concepts and terminology like multi-modal fusion and tracking nowadays being adopted by related communities like AI and Machine Learning, with researchers from these fields often only being familiar with the data-driven AI perspective while unaware of the broader theoretic IF background and model-based approaches. I am thus convinced that outreach and dissemination activities to such related communities will be crucial to ensure ISIF retains its thought leadership and leading role on IF, since researchers' profound training across the entire spectrum of IF methodologies will be key for successfully and responsibly tackling today's various complex application domains.

Preferences: VP Communications