

SwissNLP - The Swiss Association for Natural Language Processing Position Paper at Computational Linguistics European National and Regional Associations Meeting (CLEARA-MEET) at LREC, 2020

Manuela Hürlimann¹
manuela.huerlimann@zhaw.ch

Mark Cieliebak¹
mark.cieliebak@zhaw.ch

Manfred Vogel²
manfred.vogel@fhnw.ch

¹Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW), Winterthur, Switzerland

²University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW), Brugg, Switzerland

The Swiss Association for Natural Language Processing (SwissNLP) was founded in February 2020 with the goal of connecting the NLP community within Switzerland. With SwissNLP, we intend to create more visibility for NLP activities and to lay the foundations for joint projects between actors from academia and industry.

One major activity of SwissNLP is organising a yearly conference, the Swiss Text Analytics Conference (SwissText), which has been established in 2016 and attracted more than 200 participants in its last editions. SwissText is an important venue for bringing together research institutions and businesses, and as such has fostered numerous collaborations. While SwissText focuses on NLP within Switzerland, it is also open to external submissions.

SwissNLP was founded only recently and is currently in the growth phase; in the short term, its main role in European collaborations is therefore that of an observer or potential participant in joint projects. Two key areas are important to SwissNLP: Multilingual NLP (with a focus on the four official languages of Switzerland plus English and especially Swiss German) and the collaboration between industry and academia, where it aims to make significant contributions and where there is certainly an interest in cross-country initiatives.

The Association is already collaborating with CLAIRE (Confederation of Laboratories for Artificial Intelligence Research in Europe) in order to become part of the European network of Artificial Intelligence expertise.

The main goal of SwissNLP in attending CLEARA-MEET is to learn from other associations and to start connecting with them. Switzerland is actively participating in EU projects in NLP, and many Swiss universities are open to new projects in an international setting. SwissNLP can help interested institutions outside of Switzerland to find project partners for future collaborations.