**COINS Travel Report
Decentralized 2019, Athens, Greece.**

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## 1. Introduction

I attended the annual **Decentralized Conference 2019**, which took place in Athens, Greece, from 30 October to 1 November. The event was organized by the University of Nicosia and its partners. Decentralized Conference has established itself as Europe's premier conference on blockchain. It brings together the world's leading academic and business experts to debate current trends and future developments in the blockchain field.

## 2. Affiliated event: Hyperledger Workshop

The first day of the event was dedicated to a workshop. The Hyperledger workshop started with a talk by the director of Hyperledger ecosystem, Marta Piekarska, who introduced the fundamental concepts of blockchain and Hyperledger platform. She also covered the core architecture and components of Hyperledger fabric, the main focus of this workshop.

Hyperledger is a multi-project open source collaborative effort hosted by The Linux Foundation, created to advance cross-industry blockchain technologies. Hyperledger Fabric is a permissioned distributed ledger framework for developing solutions and applications. Its modular and versatile design satisfies a broad range of industry use cases. It offers a unique approach to consensus that enables performance at scale while preserving privacy.

The highlight of this session was industry professionals presenting the best practices of how to implement enterprise Hyperledger fabric and address the privacy and security challenges. These real-world examples - illustrated with diagrams, code-patterns and in some cases short demos – were helpful to deeply understand the core architecture of Fabric.

The main objective of my PhD study is to develop blockchain-based technical solutions that provide efficient and robust rights management with consensus across network players. I believe, the knowledge and experience acquired in this workshop will definitely help me to further advance in my studies.

## 3. The conference itself

The Decentralized Conference is a large event bringing together academics and industry experts from all over the world.  The conference had a large number of talks (42, divided in 2 sessions), and sometimes it was challenging to choose among two equally interesting ones. Overall, it helped me to gain insights of the technical, business, legal, and societal implications

of blockchain technologies, including real-life applications and case studies. Although many keynote talks, and paper sessions were interesting to me, I want to highlight following talks:

- **Rethinking Blockchain's Holy Grail and How to get there**, by Dr. Scott Stornetta. One of the most famous researchers in the blockchain field, Scott gave an incredibly clear and effective talk. He shared his ideas regarding the future of blockchain technology and its applications.
- **Data sovereignty on the blockchain by Michael Thoreson.**  In his talk Michael shared his knowledge on enabling self-governed data sovereignty. There are intense debates, and currently no consensus, on what it takes to anonymise personal data to the point where the resulting output can potentially be stored in a blockchain network.
- **A secure, authenticated & publicly verifiable platform for educational data using the blockchain** by Dr Velislava Hillman. Although the talk was not very technical, it was interesting to learn how Velislava and her team are developing the identity platform.

Each evening at the end of talks there was a "*networking dinner*" for all conference participants. Therefore, this conference has represented a great opportunity to connect with other researchers and exchange ideas and knowledge.

The conference itself was well-organized, and the full schedule of talks and social events made the three days feel like a significantly longer period of time.  I am grateful to the COINS research school for providing me the opportunity to attend such an event.



**Figure 1. Me at Divani Caravel Hotel, Decentralized 2019, Athens, Greece.**