



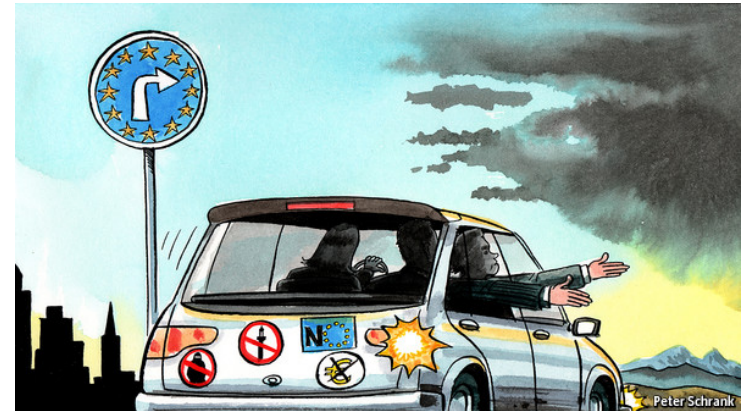
# COST Action IS1308: Populist Political Communication in Europe

## Objectives and scientific working programme

- Bring together researchers to investigate *populist political communication* and its impact on democratic political life across Europe.
- Motivation related to recent populist backlashes in many democracies against governments and political and economic developments
- Motivation related to changes in national media and communication systems.
- PPC is a poorly understood aspect, and this action will examine:
  - Populist political communicators and their strategies.
  - The media and populist discourses and frames.
  - Citizen's engagement with populist political messages and the effect of these messages.
- Provide a thorough critical review of existing knowledge and improve research co-ordination

# Need for comparative communication research

- Challenge of defining populism
  - Political populism
    - Ideology
    - Political parties
    - Right/left
  - Definite definition of media populism is still pending
    - Unintended complicity between populism and media logic
    - Populist communication: conflict between “Us” and “Them”
  - Comparing populism
    - Different driving forces
    - Mediatization empirically overlooked
    - Demand side well researched, but not supply side



# *Defining populist political actors and communication, and determining communication success*



# Norway election results: Anti-immigrant party with links to mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik set to enter government under Conservative leader Erna Solberg

Utoya mass murderer Breivik was a member of the populist right-wing Progress party, which is set to join three centre-right parties in a coalition

TONY PATERSON | TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2013

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# Research questions on populist political actors

- *Is there a specific and unique style(s) of communication that can be defined as populist?*
- *Do populists use unique communication strategies and tactics?*
- *Are there stylistic differences in the language used between mainstream and populist actors, left and right wing populist?*
- *Do populists refer to unique issues?*
- *Do leaders of parties identified as populist differ in terms of charisma and particularly their communication skills from leaders of other parties?*



# Who are the populists actors?

Populism as a contested, vague and blurred concept

- Ideology, rhetoric or communication style?
  - Dahl (1956) populist democracy, rejection of representative democracy due to crises symptoms
  - Mudde (2004) Society divided in two groups «the pure people» vs «the corrupt elite»: politics should be an expression of the will of the people.
  - Jagers & Walgrave (2007) Populism as a communication style, that refers to the people, opposes elites and minority out-groups

Jagers & Walgrave (2007)

# Populism as a communication style

## **Thin populism: The people-index**

Precondition: referring to the people

### **Proportion:**

Percentage of «people» reference in the text

### **Intensity:**

Number of times «people» are mentioned in the text



Jagers & Walgrave (2007)

# Populism as a communication style

## **Thick populism: The anti-establishment-index**

Showing the degree of hostility towards three elites

### **Anti State Discourse:**

Failure of the state to render required service

### **Anti Politics:**

General hostility towards policies, parties or politicians

### **Anti Media:**

Criticism towards media for being biased

Jagers & Walgrave (2007)

# Populism as a communication style

## **Thick populism: The exclusivity index**

Showing the traditional enemies.

### **Identify specific population categories:**

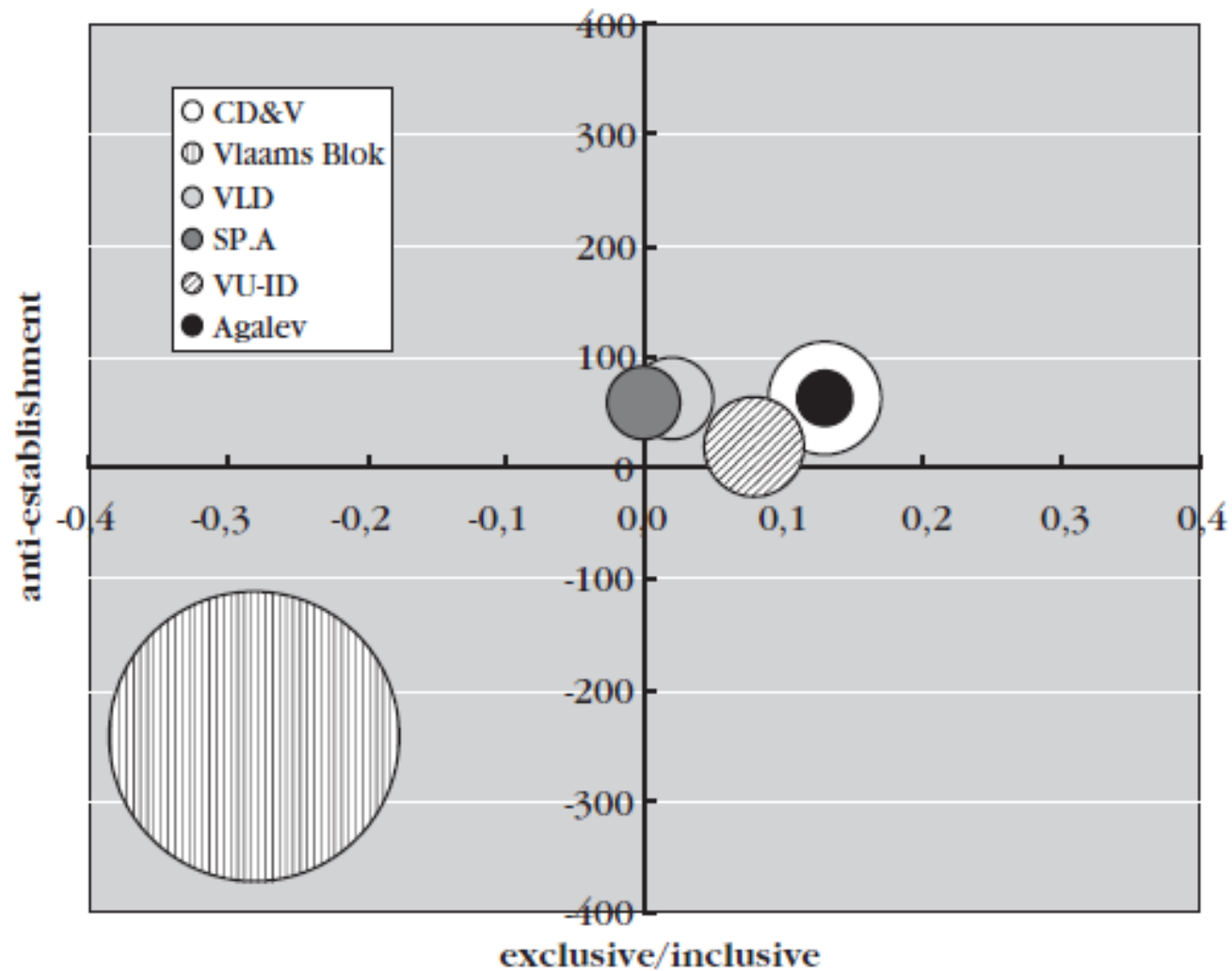
E.g. Immigrants, capitalists, workers etc.

### **Evaluative trichotomy:**

How categories are described in a i) negative ii) neutral and iii) positive way

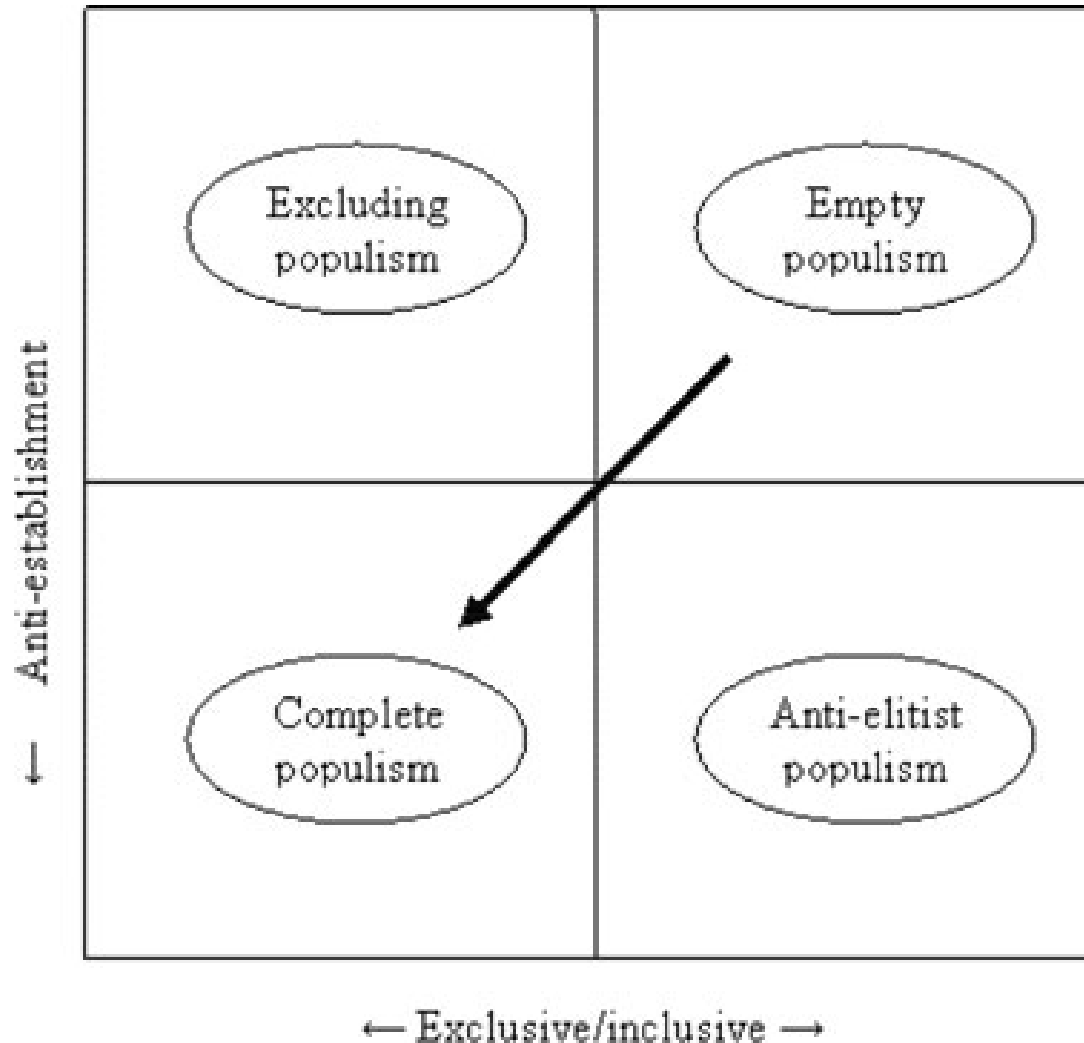
Jager & Walgrave (2007)

# Empirical results



Jager & Walgrave (2007)

# Types of populism



# *Establishing the role of the media in the promotion of populist politics*





# Research questions on the media and populism

- *How do populist actors and their communicative strategies resonate with European journalistic media?*
- *What are the reasons for differences between European countries, types of journalistic media and individual media outlets?*
- *How do populist actors and communications resonate in non-journalistic online-media like blogs, forums and social networks?*
- *What are the reasons for differences in the resonance of populist communications in citizen online-discourses?*
- *Is there a decoupling of online- vs. offline and journalistic vs. citizen discourse as indicated by the varying presence of populist actors and communications?*



Krämer (2014)

# Media populism

Definition: stylistic and ideological elements by some media: that (i) construct favoritism of in-groups, are (ii) hostile towards elites and institutions of representative democracy, (iii) rely on charisma and commonsense.

- Let the audience forget that they are an elite institution
- Anti-institutional attitude
- Use styles and rhetoric that often are impossible in official political contexts.

Media populism as a consequence of commercialization, but commercialism and populism are not identical.

# Media outlet differences

Stewart et al (2003):

Tabloid media pay more attention to right wing populist leaders in their early growth phase

Bos et al (2010):

No difference between media outlets, if any elite and pbs pay more attention to populist elements in the rhetoric of party leaders



*Understanding the effects populist messages have on citizens and how citizens engage with populist political communication*



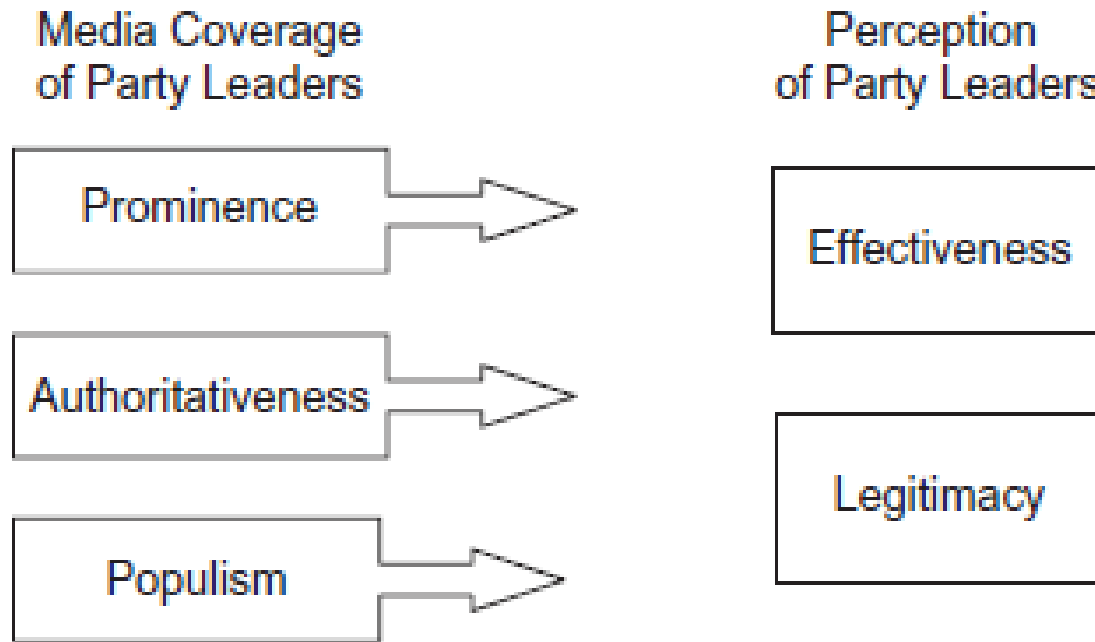
# Research questions on citizens and populism

- *How do European citizens inform themselves about politics, including populist politics?*
- *What effects of media use can be found?*
- *What are the reasons for differences between European countries in terms of political news usage and effects, and how may this influence the effect of populist messages?*



Bos et al 2010.

# The effect of populist messages



- Right wing populist leaders as dependent on the media as mainstream leaders
- Mainstream parties punished for populist style and rhetoric

# Future research



Co-ordination:

- To empirically test populist political communication *systematically* over time and space.
- To empirically establish general causes and effects

# Working programme

Task 1 (year 1) : Review relevant material and literature

Task 2 (year 1 and 2): Define a research agenda and direction

Task 3 (year 2 and 3): Integrate findings to produce coherent knowledge

Task 4 (year 3 and 4): Revitalize research on populist political communication

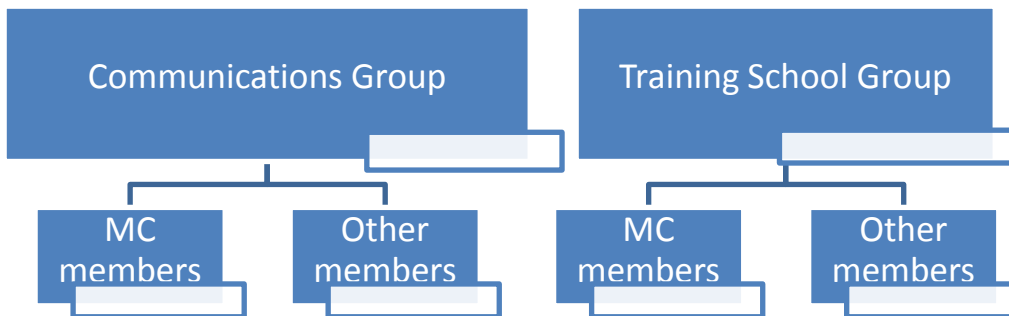
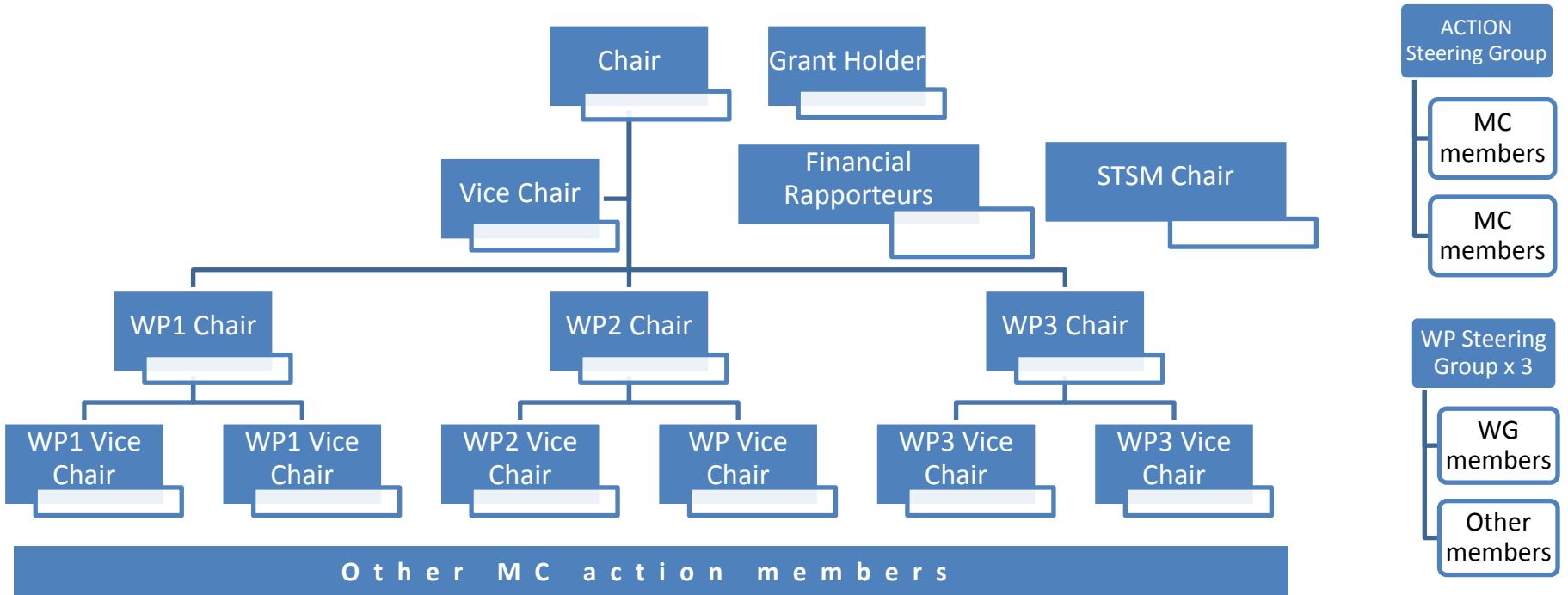
Task 5 (year 4): Develop recommendations



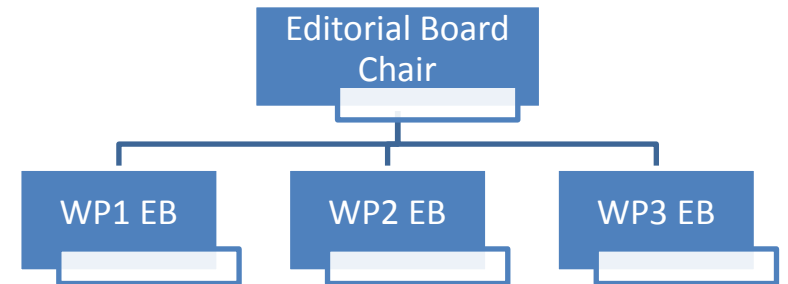
Work  
in  
progress

# Organisation

## Action Management Committee

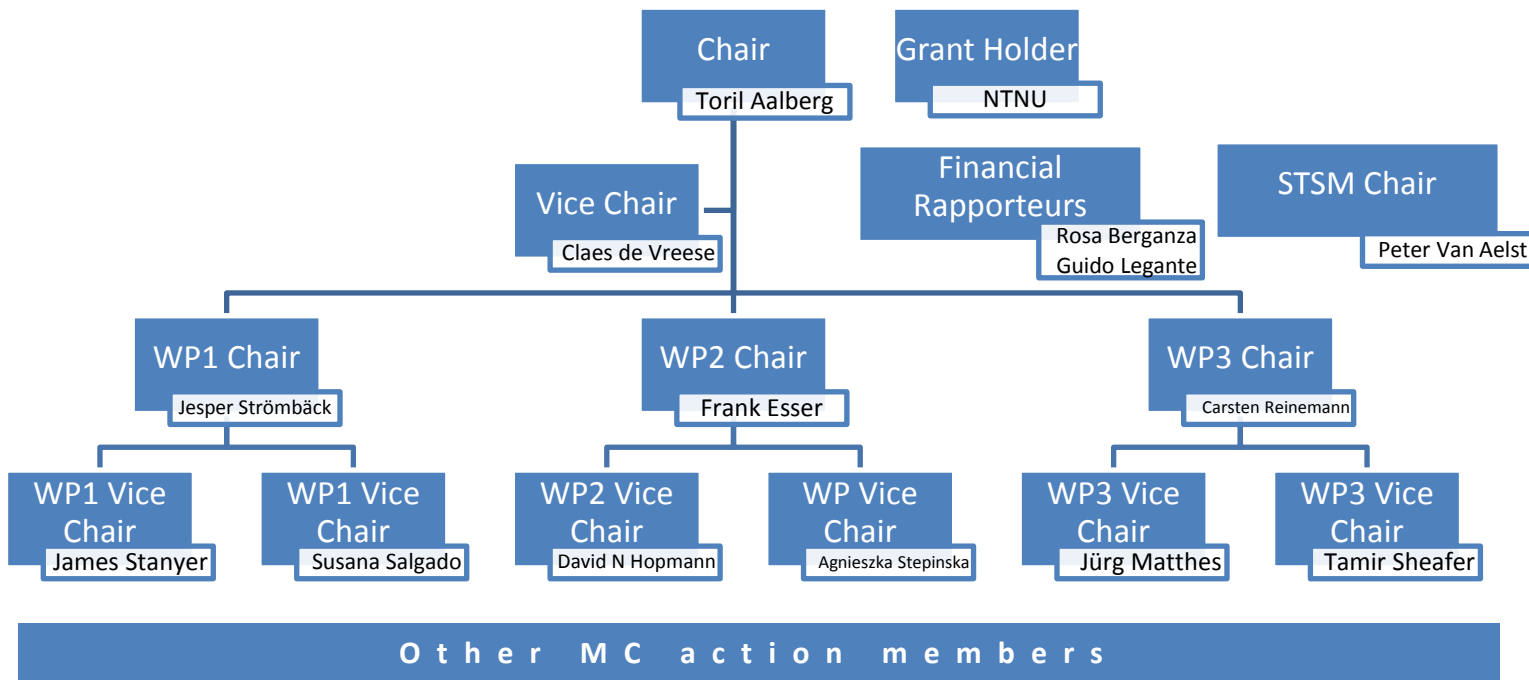


## Independent Editorial Board



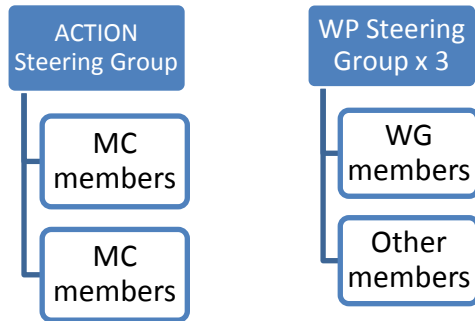
# Distribution of tasks: Proposers suggestion

## Action Management Committee

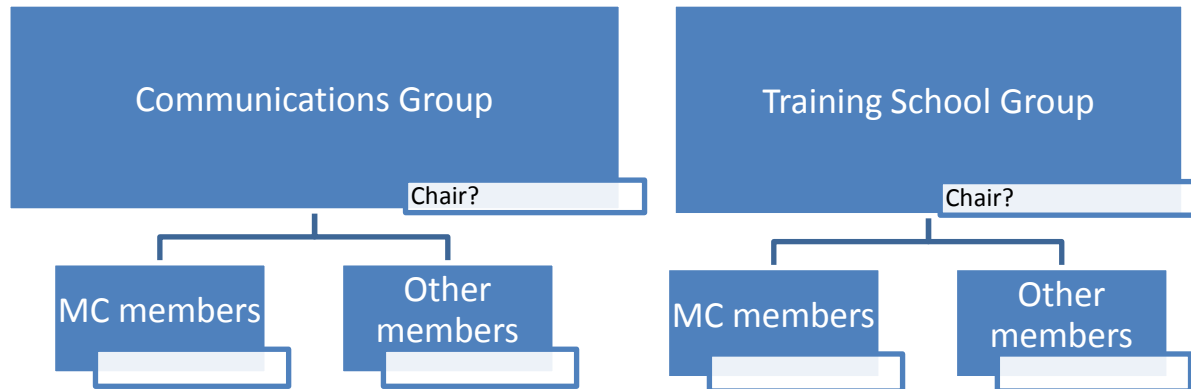
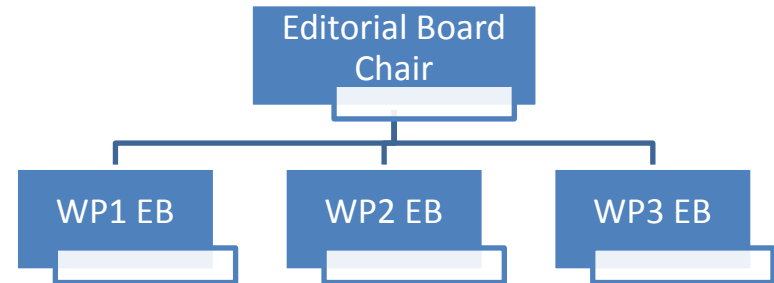


# Distribution of tasks:

## Positions still to be filled

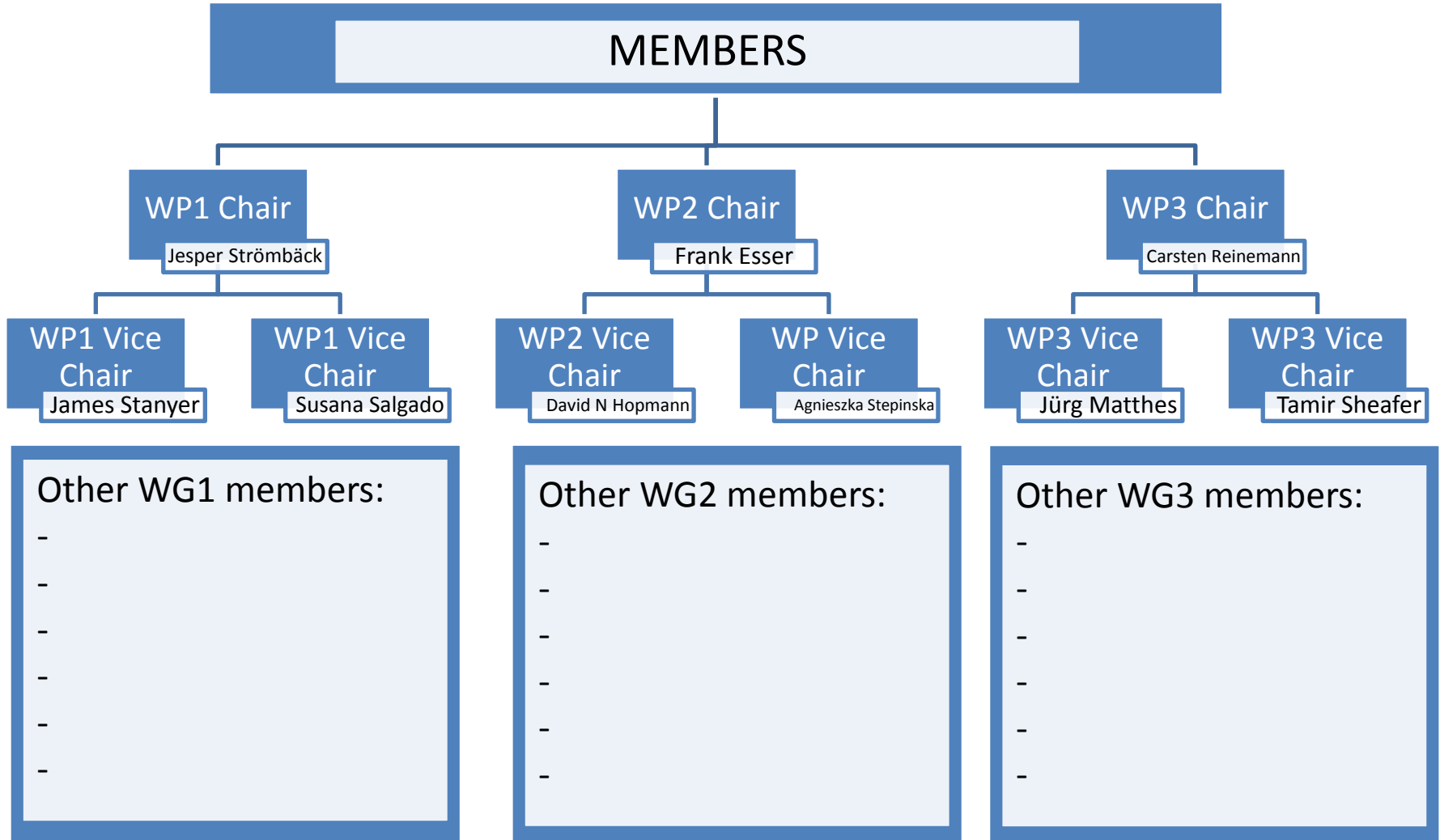


### Independent Editorial Board





# Working Groups



# Preliminary Time Table

7 April 2014 – 6 April 2018

## **First year**

- MC meeting: Brussels, 7 April 2014
- WG Workshops/MC meeting: Lisboa, 10-12 November 2014
- WG Workshops/MC meeting: Athens, March 2015?
- Action Conference: Athens, 27 March 2015?
- Early Stage Researcher Think Tank, TBA, Spring 2015?

## **Second year**

- WG Workshops/MC meeting: Odense, 26 August 2015?
- WG Workshops/MC meeting: TBA, spring 2016
- Action Workshop, TBA, spring 2016
- Early Stage Researcher Think Tank, TBA, Spring 2016

## **Third year**

- WG Workshops/MC meeting: TBA, Fall 2016
- WG Workshops/MC meeting: TBA, Spring 2017
- Action Workshop, TBA, Spring 2017
- Early Stage Researcher Think Tank, TBA, Spring 2017
- Training School, TBA, Summer 2017

## **Fourth year**

- WG workshop, TBA, Fall 2017
- Early Stage Researcher Think Tank, TBA, Fall 2017
- Action Workshop/Action Conference, TBA Spring 2018
- Final MC meeting, TBA, Spring 2018

# Budget plan

Estimated allocated budget, based on 22 countries: € 145 000

## **A. SUMMARY BUDGET**

(1)	MEETINGS	€ 107 800
(2)	SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS	€ 14 000 (ESTT)
(3)	TRAINING SCHOOLS	€ 0
(4)	PUBLICATIONS, DISSEMINATION, OUTREACH	€ 4 500
(5)	OERSA	€ 1 000

**B. TOTAL SCIENCE EXPENDITURE** (sum of (1) to (5)) € 127 300

## **C. FINANCIAL & SCIENTIFIC ADMINISTRATION AND COORDINATION**

(max. of 15% of B.) € 19 095.....

**D. TOTAL EXPENDITURE (B+C)** € 146 395.....

# Approval of Non-COST countries

## **COST Member Countries**

COST's 35 Member Countries are: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

## **Cooperating State**

Israel is a Cooperating State. Researchers from COST's Cooperating State enjoy member rights in COST [Action](#) participation.

# Place and date of next meeting



Lisbon, 10-11 November 2014

Joint WG Workshops & MC meeting

# AOB

- WG sessions: How to compose an authoritative, inclusive lit and research review and identify new questions, to be discussed at next meeting.
- Plenary: Common strategy for next meeting/WG sessions in Lisbon
- Strategy for day to day business, in between MC meetings.