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**COST Action IS1308 Populist Political Communication in Europe:  
Comprehending the Challenge of Mediated Political Populism for Democratic  
Politics**

**Short Term Scientific Mission - Scientific report**

Aristotle University Thessaloniki, School of Political Sciences

Discursive perspectives on populism and nationalism in Europe

Host: Yannis Stavrakakis, Professor, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, School of  
Political Sciences, COST IS1308 MC substitute for Greece

Period: 18.09.2016-28.09.2016

To whom it may concern,

The theme of this collaboration fit perfectly within the scope of the COST action 'Populist political communication in Europe' and contributes to the aims of the action as it a) took a discursive perspective to populism and studies the crucial communicative dimensions of populism, b) focuses on the under-researched intersections between populism and nationalism, which are crucial to our understanding of populist politics, the differences between populism across nation-states in Europe, and the potentials and limitations of transnational populism.

This stay at Aristotle University Thessaloniki was an important moment in the collaboration between Yannis Stavrakakis and the Populismus Research Group and myself on the empirical and conceptual relations between populism and nationalism, and the benefits and limitations of a discourse theoretical approach to these issues. We also discussed the future of research into populism and the future of discourse theory and discourse theoretical analysis more generally.

As set out in the work plan for the stay, the stay was the occasion for important steps in a number of ongoing collaborations on this issue, as well as a number of future collaborations further building on them.

1. We worked on editing a special issue of the journal Javnost-The Public on 'Populism, Nationalism and the Media: Representing 'the People' as Underdog and as Nation'. This will be published in 2017. We organised the peer review process.
2. We made important progress in writing the co-written opening article of that special issue on 'Populism and nationalism. Distinctions and articulations'. This article will focus on what discourse theory has to offer to the theoretical disentanglement of populism and nationalism, how it has strengthened and can strengthen the analysis of the empirical articulations between populism and nationalism. The article will also reflect on what discourse theory and discourse theoretically inspired methodology can learn from experiences with the the discourse theoretical analysis of populism and nationalism.
3. We started preliminary work on an academic article about the potentials and limitations of the 'transnational populism' of the Democracy in Europe Movement 2025. This also included discussions with one of the recently graduated master students of Yannis Stavrakakis who has written a master thesis on this topic. This research will also include a number of interviews with relevant high-level political actors connected to DiEM25 (and perhaps other organisations). The first steps in preparing these interviews have been made.
4. This DiEM25 article collaboration will form the basis for a potential collaborative international project proposal on the potential and limitations of transnational populism.
5. I gave an invited lecture on 'The articulation of nationalism, populism and conservatism in populist radical right rhetoric.' to the School of Political Sciences, Aristotle and its Populism Study Circle on 20 September 2016. The lecture was followed by an animated and relevant debate. And it contributed to the further strengthening of my network with populism researchers, as well as communicating my approach to populism, nationalism, conservatism and the radical right to young researchers working on these issues.
6. Following this invited lecture, I was interviewed by Antonis Galanopoulos on 'Populism, nationalism and the populist radical right' for an interview that was published on opendemocracy.net: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/antonis-galanopoulos-benjamin-de-cleyn/you-can-use-populism-to-send-migrants-back> (and communicated via the COST action's facebook page and website) This interview will also be translated to Greek and published in a Greek publication.
7. During the research stay in Thessaloniki I was also invited to deliver a keynote talk for the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Populism Specialist Group of the Political Science Association (co-headed by Yannis Stavrakakis) on 'Populism and the

nation state: Tensions or/and possibilities?, to be held in April 2017. We also discussed the focus of this talk.

In conclusion, the research stay was very productive in terms of short-term projects, and built the basis for longer-term collaborations. I would like to thank Yannis Stavrakakis and the Aristotle University for their very kind hosting. And I would like to thank the COST Action Populist Political Communication in Europe: Comprehending the Challenge of Mediated Political Populism for Democratic Politics, as well as the COST organisation for their generous financial support.

Kind regards,  
Benjamin De Cleen