

**The VETNET Chronicle 1992 - 2006:
Part I: Overview on the Development of *European
Vocational Education and Training (VET) Research***

Prepared by
Pekka Kämäräinen
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 - *"... The answer is blowing in the wind ..."*

1. Pre-history of VETNET 1992-1996 1(3)

Milestones

- **1992 The 'pilot' ECER in Enschede:** The idea of EERA as a European umbrella organisation
- **1993** Events of early European VET & HRD networks
- **1994 The 'pilot conference' of IRNETD, Milano:** The idea of a specific association for research in VET & HRD
- **ECER 1995, Bath:** the launch of EERA
- **ECER 1996, Sevilla:** the launch of VETNET within EERA

1. Pre-history of VETNET 1992-1996 2(3)

Community development

- Debate on the need for ***umbrella community*** in **European educational research** – *organisational membership*
- Debate on the need for ***scientific community*** in **European VET, CVT and HRD research** – *individual membership*
- Emergence of a **critical mass of researchers** with an **interest in European cooperation** in *VET-related research*

1. Pre-history of VETNET 1992-1996 3(3)

Issues on *European* VET research

- **VET research** dispersed and conceptually linked to national VET cultures (*'overcoming conceptual gaps'*)
- **Funding opportunities** scattered and linked to diverse policy priorities (*'overcoming thematic discontinuity'*)
- **European cooperation** was at an initial stage and provided limited support (*'lack of creative spaces'*)

2. Early history of VETNET 1997-2001 1(3)

Milestones

- **ECER 1997, Frankfurt:** *EU projects take the floor*
- **ECER 1998, Ljubljana:** *Networks take the floor*
- **ECER 1999, Lahti:** VETNET Opening Colloquium, VETNET Proceedings, *ICT-based tools take the floor*
- **ECER 2000, Edinburgh:** Election of the new Board, *'Key qualifications' debated across the VETNET programme*

2. Early history of VETNET 1997-2001 2(3)

Community development

- Incorporation of VETNET as a ***specific research community*** to the EERA and to the ECER programme
- Development of a ***specific network structures and a related conference culture*** for the VETNET community
- Search for ***strategic alliances*** (Cedefop, UNESCO) that would raise the ***profile of the VETNET community*** in European and international VET research

2. Early history of VETNET 1997-2001 3(3)

Issues on *European* VET research

- **Comparative & collaborative VET research** promoting cross-cultural understanding (*'overcoming conceptual gaps'*)
- **European cooperation** included targeted support measures and facilitating events (*'overcoming thematic discontinuity'*)
- **'Networking the networks'** as means to build bridges across areas of interest (*'making use of creative spaces'*)

3. Recent history of VETNET 2002-2006 1(3)

Milestones

- **ECER 2002, Lisbon:** Preparation of Consortia and proposals for the *6th Framework programme of EU*
- **ECER 2003, Hamburg:** Election of the new Board, *Debate on the VETNET research strategy*
- **ECER 2004, Crete:** VETNET Website takes shape, *Debates on 'VET PISA' and 'action research'*
- **ECER 2005, Dublin:** VETNET Conference blog takes shape, *Debates on European VET policies*
- **ECER 2006, Geneva:** Election of the new Board, *Debates on the implications of EQF on VET research*

3. Recent history of VETNET 2002-2006 2(3)

Community development

- **Consolidation of VETNET** as the umbrella community and the main platform for European VET *research*
- **Efforts to upgrade the VETNET services** (*peer reviews, pre-publishing option via the website, the Journal initiative*)
- **Efforts to develop a common debate on European VET research agenda** (*and to support the positioning of VETNET-related research initiatives*)

3. Recent history of VETNET 2002-2006 3(3)

Issues on *European* VET research

- **Comparative VET research** interests were reaching a point of relative saturation (*'overcoming conceptual gaps'*)
- **European cooperation** was becoming redirected to support long-term policy agendas – follow-up of Lisbon summit 2000 (*'overcoming thematic discontinuity'*)
- **'Networking the networks'** as means to build bridges across areas of interest (*'making use of creative spaces'*)

4. Concluding questions

Questions, Lessons and Challenges:

- Has the **VETNET community** reached *a stage of sustainable community development*?
- Has the **VETNET community** *learned to bring the VET-related European research cooperation forward*?
- Has the **VETNET community** *managed to find effective ways to contribute to new European VET policies*?
- Has the **VETNET community** *developed a capability to grasp new areas of innovation in VET development*?