



# H-Net Background

H-Net is a network of organizations of hematology, education and IT that aims to promote the harmonization of training in hematology in Europe.

H-Net, or the *European Network for Harmonisation of Training in Hematology*, is nearly at the end of its three-year project life, but its strongest components will be continued. In the context of EU education policy this document gives an overview of the origins of the project, a description of the project, what has been achieved so far and what is in store for the future.

## The Policy Context

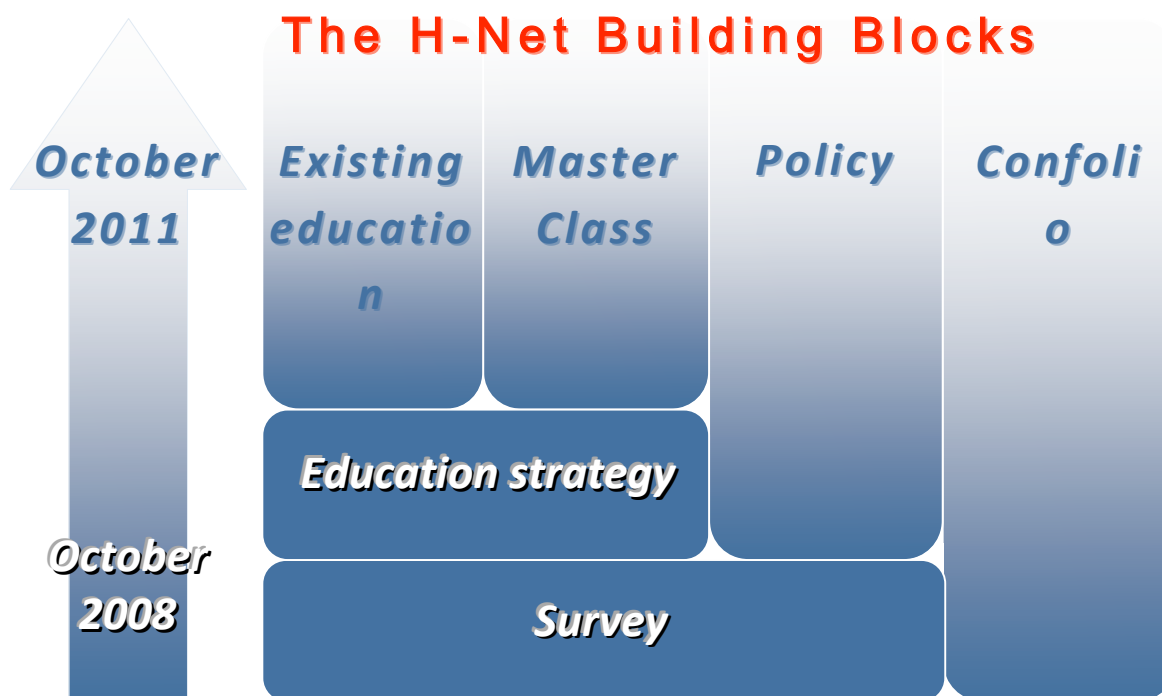
In March of 2000, the European Council adopted what has come to be known as the 'Lisbon Strategy'. Its goal is to support Europe to become a 'competitive, dynamic, and knowledge-based economy.' One important means to achieve this goal is to invest in education, and that is what the European Union did. Since education is a matter of national sovereignty, the so-called 'Open Method of Coordination' was adopted: by facilitating Member States to identify common goals and to share best practices, national education policies would converge to improve the mobility of students and professionals and to equalize and raise their skill levels.

H-Net is nothing more, and nothing less, than an assembly of the most important hematology organizations of Europe (and beyond) working to realize these goals.

In March of 2011, the H-Net partners signed a declaration in Brussels in support of a recommendation to the EC of a minimum of five years training in hematology across Europe.

## The CV Passport

H-Net cannot be understood without reference to the European Hematology Curriculum Passport. Developed in a previous project, the CV Passport describes the hematology curriculum by detailing the areas in hematology, and the levels that are recommended to be reached by hematology trainees before completion. It is a booklet in which trainees can tick off areas in hematology by indicating the level they have mastered. The first version has been through a lengthy and thorough process of revision and updating by experts and will receive its final endorsement from national societies very shortly. The descriptor levels have been altered to enable hematologists to give a far more accurate self-assessment. These recommendations have been established by a great number of national and international hematology societies and organizations in Europe. A trainee can ask his or her mentor to sign off on subsections of the passport. Thus, the Passport promotes the mobility of trainees by allowing for the possibility to receive specialty training at different training schools.



The above figure depicts the different components, or building blocks' of the H-Net project. From October 2008 to October 2011 the project has surveyed hematologists that recently completed their training, on the basis of which it is developing an education strategy. The education strategy, in turn, will inspire the modification of existing educational tools and a new one, the Master Class. The survey results has also, but not solely, guided the H-Net project in discussions with policy makers to enable the harmonization of the hematology curriculum. In addition, the online Hematology Confolio will serve individual hematologists, informing them on possible knowledge gaps and educational opportunities to fill them.

## The survey and the education strategy

H-Net has conducted a survey of hematologists that have recently completed their hematology training. The participants of the survey were requested to fill in the European Hematology Curriculum Passport. After the results were collected, the analysis began to focus on the differences between the competence levels that are filled in and the recommended competence levels expressed in the Passport. Thus, a 'competence map of European hematology' can be drawn, informing the H-Net project (and the outside world – we will publish the results for others to use) about the diversity of competence levels in Europe. This analysis will then be used to draft a plan, the strategic plan for targeted educational activities, which outlines strategies to modify existing educational tools and to develop new ones.



## The Hematology Confolio Network

H-Net will allow individual hematologists and hematological organizations to create profiles (not unlike LinkedIn or MySpace) in the Hematology Confolio. Again, the Passport will be utilized, this time to establish *individual* competence gaps. The Hematology Confolio will link these to training opportunities supplied by organizations and proposed by colleagues and peers. The Hematology Confolio is unique in its potential to grow into *the* professional network of hematologists throughout Europe.

## Existing education

Most of the partners of H-Net are educational providers themselves. The H-Net project foresees the modification of their educational activities along the lines of the solutions proposed in the targeted education strategy. For instance, EHA-ESH Scientific Workshops and tutorials, and also annual meetings of the national societies of hematology will take into account the strategy report of targeted education developed in this project. Moreover, the strategy report will become publically available for other education providers to target gaps in their respective countries or regions.

## The Master Class

The Master Class, a new educational tool that has been piloted by H-Net, emphasizes the personal needs of participants with a blend of face-to-face and on-line learning to ensure maximum flexibility. Learning needs of individuals are established from the profile of competences acquired and evidenced in their online hematology portfolios. This enables individual action plans and learning contracts for the Master Class to be delivered to ensure that all participants achieve a common standard.

## The policy

H-Net has also facilitated an open discussion between hematologists, educators, and national and European policy decision makers. The main focus of the debate has been the question whether and how national and international authorities can commit to the harmonization of the European hematology curriculum. In addition, these policy activities give hematology political exposure at the European level.



## The partners

European Hematology Association (coordinator)

Austrian Society of Hematology and Oncology

Belgian Haematological Society

British Society for Haematology

Bulgarian Society of Clinical and Transfusion Haematology

Croatian Hematology and Blood Transfusion Society

Czech Haematology Society

Danish Society of Hematology

Dutch Society of Haematology

Estonian Society of Hematology

European School of Haematology

French Society of Haematology

German Society of Hematology and Oncology

Haematology Association of Ireland

Hellenic Society of Hematology

Hungarian Society of Hematology and Transfusiology

Israeli Society of Hematology and Blood Transfusion

Italian Society of Hematology

National Cancer Institute - Cairo University

Norwegian society for Hematology

Polish Society of Hematology and Transfusion Medicine

Portuguese Society of Hematology

Romanian Society of Hematology

Slovak Society of Hematology and Transfusiology of Slovak Medical Association

Spanish Society of Hematology and Hemotherapy

Swedish Society of Haematology

Swiss Society of Hematology

Turkish Society of Hematology

University of Liverpool / The Centre for Lifelong Learning

Uppsala University / Uppsala Learning Lab