



H-Net First Annual Report

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 Haematology*, is celebrating its first birthday. As birthdays go, they provoke reflections on the past and on the future. This First Annual Report will do just that. In the context of EU education policy it will give 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

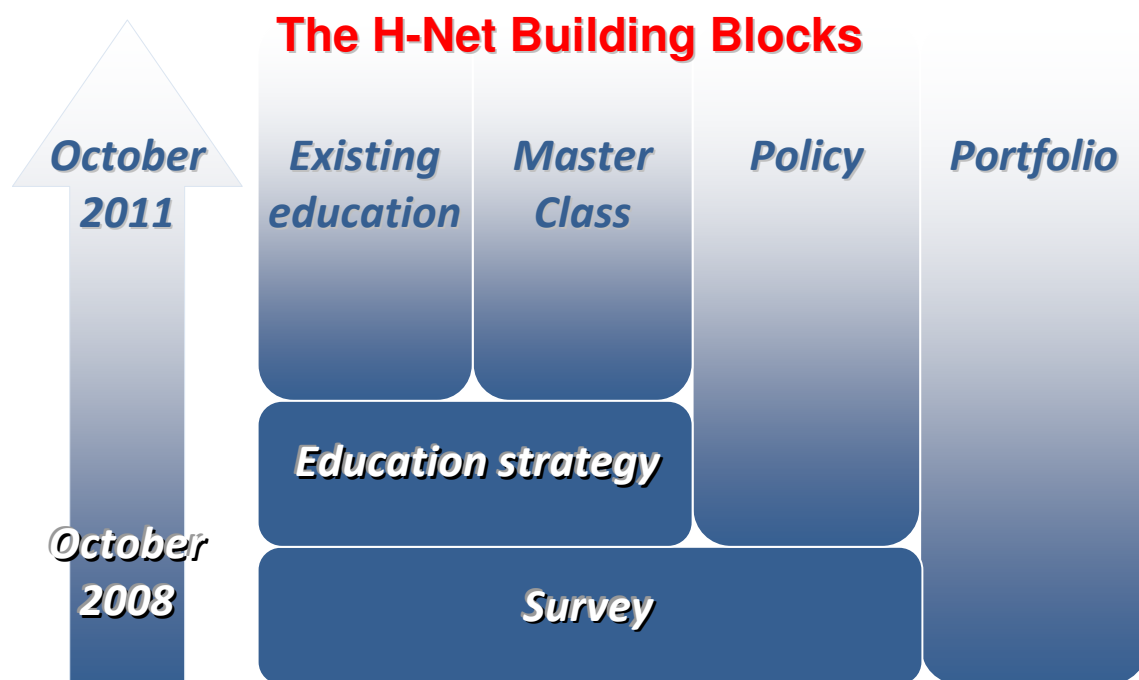
In March of 2000, the European Council adopted what has come to be known as the ‘Lisbon Strategy’. Its goal is to support Europe to become a ‘competitive, dynamic, and knowledge-based economy.’ One important means to achieve this goal is to invest in education, and that is what the European Union did. 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.

The Passport

H-Net cannot be understood without reference to the European Hematology Curriculum Passport. Developed in a previous project, the 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’s a booklet in which trainees can tick off areas in hematology by indicating the level they mastered: awareness, knowledge, or competence. The levels set in a grey square (see the excerpt of the Passport below) represent the levels trainees are recommended to reach before completion of their training. 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.

ID: HEMATOLOGICAL NEOPLASTIC DISORDERS			
The trainee has received specialized training in:			
	Awareness	Knowledge	Competence
a) Chronic myeloid leukemia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
b) Polycythemia Vera	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
c) Chronic idiopathic Myelofibrosis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
d) Hypereosinophilic syndrome	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Mastocytosis	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) Essential thrombocythemia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
g) Acute leukemias/ lymphoblastic lymphomas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
h) MDS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
i) B-cell lymphomas (Follicular, large-cell, marginal zone, mantle-cell, lymphoplasmacytic, Burkitt)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>



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

The survey and the education strategy

H-Net is currently surveying hematologists that have recently completed their hematology training. The participants of the survey are requested to fill in the European Hematology Curriculum Passport. After the results are in, the analysis will 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 Portfolio

H-Net will allow individual hematologists and hematological organizations to create profiles (not unlike LinkedIn or MySpace) in the Hematology Portfolio. Again, the Passport will be utilized, this time to establish *individual* competence gaps. The Portfolio will link these to training opportunities supplied by organizations and proposed by colleagues and peers. The Hematology Portfolio 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 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 will be piloted by H-Net, will emphasize the personal needs of participants with a blend of face-to-face and on-line learning to ensure maximum flexibility. Learning needs of individuals will be established from the profile of competences acquired and evidenced in their online hematology portfolios. This will enable 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 will also facilitate an open discussion between hematologists, educators, and national and European policy decision makers. The main focus of the debate will be the question whether and how national and international authorities can commit to the harmonization of the European hematology curriculum. In addition, these policy activities will give hematology political exposure at the European level.



1 Year into H-Net

As of yet, H-Net is not very visible to the outside world. Much of the work in the early stages of the project is of a preparatory nature. One of the first things done was the finalization of the survey questionnaire and the development of the online survey tool. In addition to the questions that are derived from the Passport, a limited number of questions (demographic, educational background, etc) were designed. Moreover, the survey was piloted, which exposed the need for more extensive explanatory notes. Simultaneously, the project members were immersed in what turned out to be one of the most difficult tasks: the recruitment of the survey respondents. Finding the address details of hematologists that recently completed their training is easy in countries where there is a central registry is easy, but many countries do not have such system. In such cases, our network partners often resorted to the presidents of training schools or utilized their own networks. It is to be expected, therefore, that the degree validity of the data from each country will vary. H-Net will continue the survey through the Hematology Portfolio to increase validity and to keep the results current.

The Hematology Portfolio is nearing completion. Before the launch of the Hematology Portfolio we will organize to have (references to) educational opportunities available, in abundance, to hematologists who can then create personal profiles in the Portfolio to find out their individual competence gaps and can find the educational opportunities to fill them.

A lot of preparatory work has been done on the development of the structure and organization of the Master Class. The first face-to-face meeting of the participants and the faculty will take place at the 15th EHA Congress in June 2010 in Barcelona. Then, until the 16th EHA Congress, when they will meet again, they will take part in synchronous and asynchronous meetings online, with the help of the Hematology Portfolio.

The preparations of the first policy meeting of H-Net are well under way as well. The meeting will take place in Brussels in March 2010. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss the policy issues that are prevalent among the partners of H-Net and to formulate a common policy goal. In March 2011 we will invite national and international policy decision makers to discuss these goals with. Thus, we aim to touch upon common ground with a network of all concerned with the goals of raising competences through harmonization.



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