

VETNET Network Meeting / General Assembly

ECER 2026, Tampere

Date: Thursday, 20.8.2026, 12:15 – 13:15

Chairs: Christof Nägele and Barbara E. Stalder, VETNET Link Convenors
Susanne Peters, Elene Quintana, Link Convenor Elect

Participants: VETNET members and other participants attending the Network Meeting / General Assembly, approx. 70 members were present.

1. Welcome and Opening

Christof Nägele and Barbara E. Stalder welcomed participants to the VETNET Network Meeting / General Assembly.

The meeting provided an overview of the current state and activities of VETNET, developments within EERN-VETNET, membership and governance issues, forthcoming conferences and publications, and preparations for ECER 2027 in Debrecen.

It was recalled that VETNET was founded in 1996 as the second research network of the European Educational Research Association (EERA).

2. VETNET at ECER 2026 in Tampere

For ECER 2026 in Tampere, VETNET received 127 submissions. Of these, 10 were rejected and 15 withdrawn. Overall participation at ECER Tampere was approximately 3'800 participants.

The number of VETNET submissions remains high compared with recent ECER conferences, confirming the continued strong presence of VET research within EERA.

3. EERN-VETNET

An update was provided on the development of EERN-VETNET, the emerging researchers' network within VETNET.

The EERN-VETNET developed from discussions connected with the Crossing Boundaries Conference in Kaunas 2023. Feedback has demonstrated clear demand and interest, and the network currently reports 52 formal members.

Current activities include:

- regular meetings during VETNET conferences;
- joint activities with JNET's Early Career Researchers and EERA digital activities;
- collaboration with national emerging researchers' groups;
- active participation of emerging researchers in the VETNET@ECER review process; and
- strengthening continuity between conferences, online activities and national groups.

The current EERN-VETNET chairpersons are Junmin Li and Susi Peters. The board currently includes Julián Bell Sebastián, Eija Lehtonen and Pujun Chen.

A planned transition for 2027 was presented. Junmin Li and Susi Peters will leave the EERN-VETNET board. Pujun Chen and Julián Bell Sebastián are the new chairpersons, with Eija Lehtonen, Lisa Meyne and Sean Manley forming the new board; Junmin Li stays on the EERN-VETNET board to support a smooth transition.

The future vision for EERN-VETNET includes:

- content-related support, including workshops and support with reviewing and academic writing;
- process-related support through informal exchange, safe spaces and informal online and conference meetings;
- stronger connections with the Emerging Researchers' Conference and clarification of roles; and
- stronger use of digital platforms, including Discord and LinkedIn.

4. VETNET Board and Governance

The current VETNET Board, elected until 2027, was presented. Christof Nägele and Barbara E. Stalder serve as Link Convenors and Heads of VETNET.

The elected board members are Michael Gessler, Natasha Kersh, Marg Malloch, Fernando Marhuenda Fluixá, Lázaro Moreno Herrera, Petri Nokelainen, Elena Quintana-Murci and Franz Kaiser. Susanne Peters and Junmin Li also participate on the Board in their role representing EERN-VETNET.

The co-opted board members are Mònica Moso-Diez, Paolo Nardi, Presha Ramasarup, Riikka Suhonen, Francesca Salvà-Mut, Stephanie Allais, Per Andersson, and Andrea Laczik.

The procedure for becoming a VETNET Board member was recalled. Nominations must reach the Link Convenors by 30 June in an election year and include the candidate's name, short biography, motivation statement and support from an existing Board member. The Board decides by majority which candidates are proposed to the General Assembly.

5. Election of New Board Members

The General Assembly considered the proposed new Board members for the remaining period 2026–2027.

The following were elected:

- Vidmantas Tūtlys, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas;

- Susanne Peters, Institute Technology and Education (ITB), University of Bremen.

It was clarified that Susanne Peters joins the Board newly ad personam and not ex officio.

6. VETNET Membership

Participants were reminded that participants attending VETNET at ECER are temporary VETNET members. Permanent membership can be requested through the application form available on the VETNET website.

Applicants need three points, based on the following criteria:

1. participation and physical presentation at at least two recognised VETNET-related conferences during the previous six years;
2. publication in one of the recognised VETNET-related publication outlets; and
3. recommendation by at least one existing VETNET member.

Board members, co-opted Board members and the Editor-in-Chief of IJRVET automatically become VETNET members.

7. VETNET Reviewers

More than 90 colleagues currently contribute to the VETNET reviewing process.

Minimum expectations for reviewers include:

- willingness to review approximately three to six papers;
- completion of a PhD;
- regular participation in VETNET-related conferences; and
- commitment to the aims and regulations of VETNET.

Action: Christof Nägele will compile the reviewer list and forward it to the EERA Office. Colleagues who do not wish to be included should inform Christof. The EERA Office is expected to send review invitations in February 2027; invitees will still be able to accept or decline individual review requests at that point.

8. Conferences and Activities in 2027

Crossing Boundaries 2027

The next Crossing Boundaries Conference will take place from 18–20 May 2027 at the Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL Centre), University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

The deadline for abstract submissions is 15 November 2026.

ECER 2027 in Debrecen

ECER 2027 will take place in **Debrecen**:

- Emerging Researchers' Conference: 30–31 August 2027

- ECER: 31 August–3 September 2027
- Abstract submission deadline: end of January 2027.

Initial preparations for the VETNET programme in Debrecen were discussed.

For the Programme Committee, Susanne Peters and Elena Quintana-Murci were named, with additional members still to be identified.

The editors for *Trends in Vocational Education and Training Research* and the Dinner Team still need to be confirmed, besides the editors in chief Christof Nägele and Barabra Stalder.

For the VETNET Opening Session, potential local contributors mentioned were Eszter Bükki, Magdolna Benke and Andrea Laczik, who are to be approached.

9. Publications

Participants were reminded of the range of publication opportunities associated with VETNET, including:

- *International Journal for Research in Vocational Education and Training (IJRVET)*;
- *Nordic Journal of Vocational Education and Training (NJVET)*;
- VETNET ECER Trends in VET research;
- Crossing Boundaries Innocations in VET Research; and
- the Stockholm International Book Series.

OAPublishing and the VETNET conference platform were also presented during the meeting. No further details are contained in the slides.

10. Communication, Blog and Social Media

VETNET members are encouraged to submit contributions to the VETNET blog. Christof Nägele is the contact person for blog submissions.

VETNET is also strengthening its presence on LinkedIn. Franz Kaiser is the contact person, and members were encouraged to connect relevant posts with @vetnet-europe.

The central source for VETNET information remains **vetnetsite.org**.

11. Actions and Follow-up

The following main actions emerged from the meeting:

- Christof Nägele, Susi Peters and Elene Quintana to compile the VETNET reviewer list and forward it to the EERA Office.
- Preparations for the VETNET programme at ECER 2027 in Debrecen to continue.
- Additional member(s) of the Debrecen Programme Committee to be identified.
- Editors for the 2027 *Trends in VET Research* proceedings to be confirmed.
- Dinner Team for Debrecen to be confirmed.
- Potential local contributors for the Debrecen VETNET Opening Session to be approached.
- Members are encouraged to contribute to the VETNET blog and LinkedIn presence.

- Members interested in permanent VETNET membership should use the application procedure on the VETNET website.

12. Closing

Christof Nägele and Barbara E. Stalder thanked all participants for their contributions and engagement in VETNET and closed the Network Meeting / General Assembly.