



# SPECIAL EDITION

## Featuring eucen's history



### eucen's contribution to Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL): A 15 year trip



In the late 1990s small groups of members worked on several projects related to VNIL with the support of eucen. Then, in 2001 eucen was invited to work with the University of Lille 1 on a major proposal to the European Commission. **Michel Feutrie**, director of SUDES at the University of Lille 1, a member of the eucen Steering Committee and well known expert in this area, worked with eucen's Executive Secretary **Pat Davies** on the proposal **TRANSFINE**. The EC accepted the idea and the work started with Lille 1 as contractor and eucen as coordinator. The aims were to collect, analyse and work on existing materials in the EU at formal, informal and non-formal levels of education with the aim to (a) investigate the feasibility of a European architecture for the recognition, transfer and accumulation of qualifications; (b) to create, develop and propose the principles, methods and tools for such a system; and

(c) to construct a specification for pilot projects to test the proposal of the project.

In 2004 the **REFINE** project started with the same leading team to test the tools for a European methodological framework for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning recommended in TRANSFINE; to foster trans-national and trans-sectoral collaboration; and to build mutual trust in the practices and procedures.

Importantly both projects involved universities, VET, Adult Education, NGOs and Trade Unions in each country.

In 2007 eucen decided to lead the next project focused on VNIL: **OBSERVAL**. This project had 27 full partners from 23 different EU countries, and developed the first version of the *European Observatory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning*. With Michel Feutrie leading the project, now as President of eucen,

OBSERVAL collated more than 100 documents on VNIL from all over Europe and created 27 country profiles explaining the state of the art of VNIL in each of them.



In 2011 eucen started its **OBSERVAL-Net** project, a follow up of OBSERVAL with the aim of enhancing the original observatory, focusing on 3 main themes pinned by OBSERVAL: Bottom-up approach, VNIL new professions and Work-based VNIL. This project also produced an advocacy pack that included a Manifesto, a set of references to VNIL and three flash cards (one for each main area) with inspiring cases of the results of best practice.

Since OBSERVAL-Net eucen has been invited to join different projects coordinated by others, all focusing on VNIL. Currently eucen participates in VALERU and PROMOTE and is also a full partner in 3 new proposals submitted recently in the framework of the 2015 Calls.

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#### Milestones:

- | eucen coordinates the projects TRANSFINE and RE-FINE, where University Lille 1 (FR) was the contractor  
[www.eucen.eu/REFINE/All.html](http://www.eucen.eu/REFINE/All.html) 
- | Michel Feutrie, former President of eucen and expert in RPL and VNIL, guides and leads eucen's path
- | eucen submits its OBSERVAL proposal in 2007 that develops the *European observatory of VNIL* and collects over 100 documents from 23 different European Countries
- | eucen submits its follow up project OBSERVAL-Net in 2011 which was the only KA1 Networks project selected that year, obtaining a final evaluation of 9/10
- | The European observatory for VNIL is reviewed and enhanced via eucen's project OBSERVAL-Net : [www.observal-net.eu/](http://www.observal-net.eu/) 
- | eucen continues with its focus on VNIL and participates as full partners in different projects (coordinated by other institutions) such as VALERU (Tempus) [www.valeru.eu](http://www.valeru.eu) or PROMOTE <http://promote-eu.org/> (Erasmus+ KA2) 



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Graphic design of the 'EUCEN news'  
magazine in the 90s.

## What was eucen publishing in 1997?

In 1997 eucen changed the layout and soul of its newsletter. "EUCEN news" was born!

A number of sections were planned: **What's on** (with news from the Steering Committee), **Conferences** (to promote eucen's next event), **Welcome** (to introduce new members), **Calling EU** (with key information from Brussels), **Focus on** (highlighting national debates), **Market place** (for members seeking partners or collaborations) and **Members' info** (for members to explain their innovative projects or activities). As you can see, very participative and well thought.

On this page you can read two articles taken from the 1997 newsletters.

Right: eucen's Conference in Dublin in 1997 article, where our former member of the Steering Committee, Raymond Thompson gave a keynote speech.

Below: Focus on article about the Thematic Network Forum hosted by eucen for the European Commission (Maria-Esmeralda Almeida Teixeira from the EC in the photo below). eucen's project TheNUCE was an important network in the founding programme.

### Encouraging creativity and innovation

Dublin, Ireland - 17-18 October 1997, 14th EUCEN conference. This was a new arrangement - hosted by the University of Ulster (UK) but taking place in Dublin (Republic of Ireland) which just shows how networks can transcend political boundaries. The highlight of the conference was a keynote presentation from Raymond Thompson, from the University of Strathclyde in Scotland, on the need for continuing education in the arts and culture, a case supported by the Round Table of European Industrialists. He argued passionately that continuing education currently over emphasises the human capital approach, concerned with ensuring that individuals have the skills required by big business and industry for economic efficiency. But individuals are also people living in communities with relationships, social values and moral



Raymond Thompson

obligations. Using paintings to illustrate his point, he showed how the arts can stimulate the imagination to contemplate death, solitude, despair and the false pride associated with race. 'Without imagination there can be no horror' but the arts can bring about a 'purification of the soul' and stimulate the action required to make the world a better place for everyone.

The Proceedings are on the Web via the University of Ulster.

### Thematic Networks Forum

Dublin, Ireland 15-16 October 1997. On behalf of DG22, EUCEN organised the first forum bringing together all the Socrates Thematic Network Projects (TNPs). Ninety people from 20 countries participated, with Maria-Esmeralda Almeida-Teixeira representing DG 22.



Four groups worked on topics common to all the TNPs and produced recommendations to DG 22:

- Good practice in TNPs - internal management, quality control, funding, solutions to problems
- TNPs and research
- International, technological and open and distance learning dimensions
- Links between TNPs and society professional development, equal opportunities and social inclusion, links between the labour market and the professions.

The opportunity to exchange information, to discuss common problems and to look for solutions was very valuable to all participants. The report will be published by DG22.