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**EDITORIAL**

By **Gérald Santucci**, Head of Unit , Information Society and Media D.G.,  
Networked Enterprise & Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)

**Invitation**

This is an invitation. Yes, I'm talking to you, reader of this Newsletter, wherever you are sitting right now fussing round something, or standing in the middle of a crowd on public transportation, or musing at home on some very important or small issue at the end of the day. I'm inviting you to the opening of a new development that I hope will never close.

I'm talking about INTEROP-VLab (European Virtual Laboratory for Enterprise Interoperability) which has been created on 16 March 2007. 2007 will certainly be remembered as a time of great change in the area of information and communications technologies: the EU Regulation pushed forward by Commissioner Viviane Reding to bring down substantially the charges for using mobile phones abroad ("roaming"); the upsurge of global initiatives around the "network of the future", the shift to the "Internet of things"; Google's DoubleClick strategic move; and whatever else has really caught your attention. But let me bet on the presence of INTEROP-VLab in the shortlist of widely recognised important events for this year!

INTEROP-VLab will build on the research programmes and research structures established by the EU-funded INTEROP Network of Excellence. Therefore, it will continue to promote and coordinate European research along the three domains of the network – Enterprise Modelling, Ontologies and Semantic Technologies, and Architectures and Technological Platforms. Most importantly to me, it will be a virtual, distributed and coordinated research organisation in the enterprise interoperability domain capable of aggregating and integrating existing and future research laboratories to achieve common goals such as shortening the implementation time cycle of interoperability solutions in industry and developing high education curricula and training e-services.

The ambition is promethean at this point, but the technology is there, the commitment of the "Poles" (i.e. the set of partners located in a geographical territory) is also there, and the concept is very "21<sup>st</sup> century" – to provide a collaborative space where partners from Academia and Industry can share knowledge, discoveries, resources and experiences as well as virtual library and mobility opportunities with others. By mid-2008 it is expected that INTEROP-VLab will involve 12 Poles, 100 partners and more than 500 researchers.

The creation of INTEROP-VLab is already a European success story of which both the European Commission and the INTEROP network of excellence can be justly proud. It has actually started to tackle and reduce the fragmentation of European research in the enterprise interoperability domain by combining complementary expertise to attain a critical mass of technical, financial and human resources. Moreover, the presence of a Chinese Pole (located at Harbin Institute of Technology) highlights the lab's world-wide attractiveness. I'm sure the lab will help develop new products and services in existing businesses, encourage "spin-outs" of new firms based within the Poles, and develop products at the cutting edge of ICT.

Besides this, I have no doubt that INTEROP-VLab will be one warm, inviting digital place where any researcher can hang out, teach and learn things, and feel part of a community of people who share the goal of fostering enthusiasm for Europe-wide collaboration in enterprise interoperability research for addressing the challenges posed by the emerging knowledge-based economy.

You will certainly agree that there is much work to be accomplished to durably maintain and expand the new European research community founded by the INTEROP Network of Excellence. INTEROP-VLab is a first initiative and a major one indeed. So I would like to reiterate here my gratitude to all the partners of the INTEROP Network of Excellence and to the first administrators of the INTEROP-VLab for their commitment and dedication to making enterprise interoperability a new scientific discipline that will support Europe's claim to world leadership in the knowledge-based economy.

## WELCOME

By Prof. Jean-Paul BOURRIERES, President of INTEROP-VLab

### Welcome to INTEROP-VLab!



Welcome to INTEROP-VLab, the Virtual Research Laboratory on ENTERPRISE INTEROPERABILITY.

Building on the assets of INTEROP-NoE (FP6 Network-of-Excellence) from 42 months of intense integrating, joint research and dissemination activities in the domain of Enterprise Interoperability, INTEROP-VLab is an initiative to develop a large scale networked research community in Europe and beyond.

Co-ordinating a large network of research resources from both Academia and Industry, the ambition of INTEROP-VLab is to achieve in the domain of Enterprise Interoperability (EI) a number of goals that organisations alone would not be able to achieve: i) provide the upstream concepts and methodologies to shorten the implementation time cycle of powerful interoperability solutions in Industry, ii) influence standards, iii) develop new higher education curricula at the Master's level and iv) offer training e-services.

By joining INTEROP-VLab, the participants access an international community, a work programme and a set of dedicated resources: a collaborative platform, a Knowledge Map, an Interoperability Explicit Knowledge Repository, e-services for Training and Education (Master's programmes).

The attractiveness of INTEROP-VLab is strongly reinforced by its decentralised organisation: partners access to INTEROP-VLab through regional, interregional or national gates so-called *Poles*. The Poles largely simplify the issue of the legal membership and align INTEROP-VLab's policy with regional incentives for Research and for Technology Transfer in specific sectors.

An instrument to synergise a critical mass of research and education resources in the EI domain, INTEROP-VLab is starting with 8 Poles in Europe and China, 72 partner organisations (80% Academia, 20% Industry), 320 researchers. The membership is expected to grow rapidly up to 12 Poles, 100 organisations and 500 researchers in its first year.

This already successful audience confirms the ambitious and promising perspectives of INTEROP-VLab to promote Enterprise Interoperability as a key domain for enterprise competitiveness.

Long life to INTEROP-VLab!

## INTEROP-VLab Future Events



Bureau Aquitaine Europe

**Next Extraordinary General Assembly:** 26-27 September, 2007, Brussels, Bureau Aquitaine Europe, 19 avenue de l'Yser - B-1040 Brussels

The next Extraordinary General Assembly will be in fact the first GA after the creation of the legal structure of INTEROP-VLab : the AISBL (Association Internationale sans but lucratif de Loi Belge : a non-profit International Association under the Belgian law).

The two very important subjects will be:

- The admission of the new poles( in principle 6)
- The adoption of the scientific programme for the next three years

In parallel of the GA, the scientific committee of INTEROP-VLab will held an important meeting.

**Welcome to next I-ESA 2008** in Berlin. Conference 26-28 March 2008 – Pre-conference 25 March 2008

[www.i-esa.org](http://www.i-esa.org)

Promotors:



Deutsches Forum für  
Interoperabilität e.V.



## INTEROP-VLab News



Brussels, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007, creation of INTEROP-VLab

**Creation of INTEROP-VLab:** On 16 March 2007, at the Brussels's Beverly Hills Hotel, the four existing poles: France "Grand Sud-Ouest", German, English and Chinese Poles (see the article "INTEROP-VLab organization") have officially created the legal structure of INTEROP-VLab.

They were supported by the six other poles in formation, these are: Greek, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, France "Grande Region" and North Poles, which will become members soon.

**Board Director of INTEROP-VLab:** on 16 March 2007, the 1<sup>st</sup> General Assembly of INTEROP-VLab has elected the Board Director:

- Prof. Jean-Paul Bourrières / Univ. Bordeaux 1 (President)
- Prof. Keith Poplewell / Coventry Univ. (Secretary)
- Prof. Kai Mertins / FhG IPK (Treasurer)

The INTEROP-VLab board in its meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup> has nominated Prof. Guy Doumeings, GFI Consulting, Emeritus Professor of University Bordeaux 1 as General Manager, and Ms. Cathy LIEU, as Assistant Manager.

### Settling of the INTEROP-VLab Operational office, at the University Bordeaux 1:

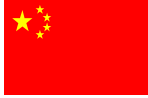
INTEROP-VLab organised, on May 29<sup>th</sup> 2007, an event to celebrate the implementation of its Operational office at the University Bordeaux 1. The event counted with the support of the University Bordeaux 1 represented by its President, Prof. Boudou, and the Conseil Régional of Aquitaine represented by its president, Alain Rousset. The participation of Cristina Martínez, representing Gérald Santucci, Head of Unit at INFOSO Media Directorate-General (European Commission) was also remarkable. Various representatives of the local authorities were invited as well as the Governing Committee of INTEROP-NoE members.



Delivery of membership certificate to the four existing INTEROP-VLab Poles

**Last Review of the INTEROP-NoE VLab:** after 42 months of existence, the last review of the project by the European Commission was organised on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> May at the University Bordeaux 1. The review team was composed of Prof. Nada Lavrac, Prof. Robert Meersman, Mr. Paul Oude Luttighuis, Prof. Joseph Tah and Mr. Bryan Wood, coordinated by the Project Officer Cristina Martínez, from the European Commission. The conclusion of the review was very positive, INTEROP NoE has reached almost all the objectives announced in the DoW (Document of Work). The creation of INTEROP-VLab is the most visible result among other results also very interesting, however, the development of the tool Knowledge Map (KMap) and the European Master in Enterprise Interoperability were underlined.

## Focus on INTEROP-VLab Poles



## News from GIS/INTEROP-CN, the INTEROP-VLab China Pole

The second board meeting of the GIS / INTEROP-CN occurred on 9-10 April, 2007 in Harbin Institute of Technology, Harbin, China. Professor Xu Xiaofei, dean of School of Computer Science and Technology, Harbin Institute of Technology chaired the meeting and conducted a roll call. All the thirteen members of China pole have sent their representatives appearing in this meeting. China pole members elected its administration committee, scientific committee, management board, education coordinators, industry coordinator, marketing coordinator and management team during this meeting. The official website of China pole was also opened ([www.interop-vlab.cn](http://www.interop-vlab.cn)).

A ceremony to celebrate the creation of the GIS/INTEROP-CN was organized on April 10<sup>th</sup>. This ceremony was chaired by the representative of the President of HIT, Prof. WANG Shugo, the president of University Bordeaux 1, Prof. Boudou, Prof. XU Xiaofei representative of INTEROP-VLab for ASIA, Prof. Bourrieres, president of INTEROP-VLab, Prof. Guy Doumeings general manager of INTEROP-VLab. The certificate of INTEROP-VLab membership was given to the thirteen members of the GIS/INTEROP-CN. during this ceremony.

## Members of the GIS/INTEROP-CN:

- Harbin Institute of Technology-Research Center of Intelligent Computing for the Enterprises and Services, Harbin
- Institute of Software Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing
- Northwest Polytechnical University, Xian
- Zhengzhou University, Zhengzhou
- University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, Chengdu
- Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou
- Harbin Engineering University-High Dependability Computing Technology R&D Center, Harbin
- Southeast University, Nanjing
- Shandong University, Jinan
- Zhejiang University- Institute of Production Engineering, Hangzhou
- Shenyang Institute of Automation, Shenyang
- Harbin University of Science and Technology, Harbin
- Beihang university, Beijing

## InterOP - VLab China Pole



Interop-VLab China Pole seminar, in Harbin (China), April 9<sup>th</sup> 2007, with the participation of the French Delegation (University Bordeaux I)


**News from INTEROP-VLab.it, the INTEROP-VLab Italian Pole**


The process of constitution of the "Italian Research Consortium in Information and Communication Technologies For Enterprise Interoperability" is currently in its final phase; 5 founding partners, have already - by their resolution - joint the Pole:

- IASI-CNR;
- Università degli Studi di Milano;
- Università di Brescia;
- Università Politecnica delle Marche;
- Consorzio START

We remark the importance of the deliberation of the Ministry of Research that has finally approved the participation of IASI-CNR (coordinator) to the Italian Research Pole Interop-VLab.It.

Other six institutions have expressed the will of joining the Pole, two of them (Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali "Guido Carli" and CSI-Piemonte) contextually to the constitution and the remaining four, as soon as their internal approval procedures will be completed; the four cited institutions are the following:

- Università di Roma "La Sapienza";
- Politecnico di Bari;
- Università di Torino;
- ENEA SIC-UDA-PMI.

The Consortium, composed by the seven mentioned founding partners, will be constituted in the next period, after the deposit of the corporation stock. Afterwards, the members of corporate officers will be appointed according to the Italian Civil Code rules as well as the Italian Pole's representative. The whole process of constitution should terminate, at latest, within September 2007.



In collaborazione con



### Presentation of the InterOP-VLab.it at the Forum PA

#### Pole for the Scientific and Technological Research on Enterprise Interoperability – Interop-Vlab.it

On May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007 the national workshop of presentation of the Italian Research Pole "Interop-Vlab.It" took place in the context of the Forum PA.

Forum PA is a large annual event, counting of an exhibition and a series of conferences and workshops having as core theme: the innovation in the Public administration and the future of e-Government. Forum P.A., which runs for a full week, had 400 exhibitors and a total number of visitors around 140.000 (of which 95.000 followed the workshops through the medium of Internet).

The "Interop-Vlab.It" workshop took place the second day of the Forum PA week and was organized in three sessions. The "Opening Session" - with the participation of qualified representatives of the Central Public Administration, in particular: B. Magnolfi, vice-Minister in the Public Administration and Innovation Ministry; F. Beltrame, Director of the ICT Department of the National Research Council; A. Mascioli, Italian Delegate, European Committee 7FP-ICT. Both at National and European level, the speakers provided a broad view of the current situation about technological research in this session. The event had a special focus on interoperability issues and the needs of Pas. National field experts participated in the second session "Interoperability challenges". They presented synthetically the three scientific/technological dimensions: Organization, Technologies and Semantics. Finally, and during the last session entitled "Needs and expectations of users", performed as a panel, different application perspectives were addressed, focusing on concrete problems.

The "Interop-Vlab.It" workshop has been a great success, both in terms of attendees (approximately 70) and the level of participation.

**FEATURES ON:****By Keith Popplewell, INTEROP-VLab General Secretary****INTEROP-VLab Organisation**

INTEROP-VLab is, as many readers will know, the entity created to continue the work of INTEROP-NoE after its completion. It has been created as an Association International Sans But Lucratif (AISBL), which, under Belgian law allows it to operate as a legal, not-for-profit entity. It is managed, under its statutes, by a General Assembly which must meet at least annually. The General Assembly consists of representatives of all the currently active members, the INTEROP-VLab Poles.

**Active INTEROP-VLab Poles**

**UK Pole** located in Coventry, represented by TANet, a Limited without shares organization, led by Prof. Keith Popplewell (University of Coventry);

**German Pole** located in Berlin, represented by DFI (Deutsches Forum für Interoperabilität), a German Association, led by Prof. Kai Mertins (IPK, Fraunhofer, Berlin);

**GSO Pole** (Grand Sud-Ouest, France), located in Bordeaux, a Scientific Interest Grouping (SIG), represented by University Bordeaux 1, led by Prof. Jean-Paul Bourrières;

**Chinese Pole** located in Harbin, a SIG represented by Harbin Institute of Technology, led by Prof Xiaofei Xu.

These Poles are regional partnerships of parties interested in the promotion, development and implementation of Enterprise Interoperability in its widest sense. The legal structure of Poles is not prescribed, as they have to be formed under the law of the nation or nations they represent, and already, with just the first four active Poles, there are several different Pole structures. The basic requirement, though, is that each Pole represents at least three (and hopefully many more) partners.

The first four active Poles were all signatories to the statute founding the INTEROP-VLab in Brussels on 16 March 2006, and of course it is planned that there will be more Poles very soon. Six more are in the process of formation, and are expected to become active members at the next General Assembly, and more are anticipated. Poles such as those listed are classed as observer members of INTEROP-VLab, and enjoy many of the benefits of full, active membership but with of course some restrictions on things like voting rights. Being admitted as an observer member of the INTEROP-VLab implies a commitment on both sides to working towards full membership as quickly as possible, but gives time for the partners of the new Pole to establish a legal structure for the Pole (INTEROP-VLab statutes allow only legal entities to be active members under Belgian law), and to negotiate ways of participating to mutual benefit.

The Board of Directors of INTEROP-VLab was established at the inaugural Directors' meeting held formally as part of the creation event with the Notary Public in Brussels in March, and consists of Jean-Paul Bourrières (chairman), Kai Mertins (Treasurer), Keith Popplewell (Secretary) and Guy Doumeings (General Manager). The Board is currently working towards full establishment of the INTEROP-VLab: we have to await for the legal processes in Belgium to grind away to conclusion before we can truly complete the process, for example we are waiting documents from the Notary Public before we can establish a bank account. However we are making steady progress. We should soon be in a position to ask all the Poles for payment of their subscriptions and pay them into an INTEROP-VLab bank account. We have a formal registered address in Brussels (it has to be in Belgium) in place, operated for us by the Bureau d'Aquitaine, and it is there that the public event in September will take place, alongside the first General Assembly. Besides the Board of Directors there is a Scientific Committee chaired by Michele Missikoff. This too is working on a document defining its activities, but like the Board needs a little time to complete everything – especially with FP7 submission deadlines and the INTEROP-NoE review all in the same period.

**INTEROP-VLab Poles in Formation**

**Spanish Pole**, located in Valencia, an Association (INTERVAL), led by Prof. Raul Poler Escotto (Universidad Politécnica de Valencia);

**Italian Pole** located in Roma, a Limited Liability Consortium Company (InterOP-VLab.it) led by Dr. Michele Missikoff (CNR IASI);

**Greek Pole** located in Athens, an Association led by Prof. Yannis Charalabidis (National Technical University of Athens);

**North Pole** (Sweden, Norway, Finland) located in Oslo, a SIG represented by SINTEF, led by Dr. Arne Berre;

**Grande Région Pole** (Lorraine, Luxembourg, Belgium) located in Nancy, a SIG represented by University of Nancy led by Prof. Nacer Boudjlida (LORIA);

**Portuguese Pole** located in Lisbon, a SIG represented by UNINOVA, a research center of New University of Lisbon led by Prof. Steiger (UNINOVA).

**Information on European Projects submitted to 7th FP (DG INFSO, challenge 1.2 and 1.3)****By Keith Popplewell, General Secretary of INTEROP-VLab**

JANUS SMEs	<p>Joint Advanced System for Networked Enterprises with Ubiquitous Solutions for SMEs</p> <p>Co-ordinator: Groupe GFI – GFI Consulting, France</p> <p><b>Consortium:</b>  AIDIMA Furniture, Wood and Packaging Technology Institute, Spain  China Aviation Industry Corporation II, China  Universita di Roma “La Sapienza”, Italy  EBM Websourcing, France  Harbin Institute of Technology, China  INSIEL Innovation, Spain  Fraunhofer Institute for Production Systems and Design Technology, Germany  Institute of Software – Chinese Academy of Sciences, China  SingularLogic Information Systems and Applications, Bulgaria  SINTEF ICT, Norway  Consorzio START, Italy  Technology Application Network Ltd., UK  University of Bordeaux 1 – LAPS, France  Universidad Politécnicna de Valencia, Spain</p>
SYNERGY	<p>Supporting Highly-Adaptive Network Enterprise Collaboration through Semantically-Enabled Knowledge Services</p> <p>Co-ordinator: Coventry University, UK</p> <p><b>Consortium:</b>  Forschungszentrum Informatik an der Universitaet Karlsruhe, Germany  Institute of Communication and Computer Systems, Greece  CIM College d.o.o., Serbia  Loughborough University, UK  Douglas Connect, Switzerland  Technology Application Network Limited, UK  EBM WebSourcing, France</p>
EN-GYM	<p>The Enterprise Networks Gymnasium for training SMEs towards Collaboration and Interoperability</p> <p>Co-ordinator: Consorzio Milano Ricerche (CMR), Italy</p> <p><b>Consortium:</b>  Consorzio Milano Ricerche, Italy  BIBA University of Bremen, Germany  University of Bordeaux 1, France  Institut Jozef Stefan, Slovenia  ALFAMICRO, Portugal  MIT, Germany  ATOS, Spain  AIDIMA Furniture, Wood and Packaging Technology Institute, Spain  Innovazione+, Italy  Slovenian Automotive Cluster, Slovenia  Plastic Mould Cluster, Portugal</p>

NORNS	<p>RFID Integral Tracking System for Non-Homogeneous Loads</p> <p>Co-ordinator: UCLM, Spain</p> <p><b>Consortium:</b>          University of Castilla-La Mancha UCLM Spain          Norwegian University of Science and Technology NTNU Norway          Centre de Recherche en Automatique de Nancy - University Henri Poincaré Nancy I UHP France          University of Bergamo UNIBG Italy          Technical University of Darmstadt TUD Germany          LipssoftElectronics S.L. LE Spain          Ecole Polytechnique Federale De Lausanne EPFL Switzerland          PREDICT France          University of Granada UGR Spain          VDI/VDE-IT Germany, University of León ULE Spain          José García Carrión JGC Spain,          University of Strathclyde US UK          Controlmatic CONTROLMATIC Finland          BIBA Germany          Groupe Soufflet GS France          The Foundation for Scientific and Industrial Research at the Norwegian Institute of Technology (NTH) SINTEF Norway          FEIG Electronic GmbH FEIG Germany</p>
RECOST	<p>Recommendations for Reconciliation of Standardisation Activities</p> <p>Co-ordinator: Fraunhofer Gesellschaft, FhG IPK, Germany</p> <p><b>Consortium:</b>          CIMOSA Association, Germany          Fundación European Software Institute, Spain          Universitetet i Bergen, Norway          University of Kassel, Germany          University Bordeaux 1, France</p>
USE	<p>Unbounded Service Design, Engineering and Use</p> <p>Co-ordinator: Fraunhofer IPK-Berlin, Germany</p> <p><b>Consortium:</b>          TANet, Ltd., UK          University of Ljubljana, Slovenia          SOFISTiK Hellas S.A., Greece          University of Amsterdam, Netherlands          My-Xml, Luxembourg          EADS 3 SIGMA, Greece          Harbin Institute of Technology, China          AVIC II, China</p>

In addition to the FP7 proposals listed above, we are quite certain there are several further proposals generated by or involving INTEROP-VLab partners. However full details of these are not available for publication at this time.



## GENERAL INFORMATION

## Calendar

- IFAC-CEA 07 Monterrey Nuevo León, México, October 2-10, 2007, IFAC conference on Cost Effective Automation in Networked Product Development and Manufacturing, <http://cidyt.mty.itesm.mx/ifac-CEA07/>
- eChallenges e-2007, Conference & Exhibition 24 - 26 October 2007, The Hague, The Netherlands. [www.echallenges.org](http://www.echallenges.org)
- 9th ACM International Workshop on Web Information and Data Management (WIDM 2007), November 9, 2007, Lisbon, Portugal, <http://workshops.inf.ed.ac.uk/WIDM2007>
- I-ESA 08, I-ESA 2008 in Berlin, Conference, 26 – 28 March 2008 – Pre-conference 25 March 2008, [www.i-esa.org](http://www.i-esa.org)
- International Workshop on Advanced Information Systems for Enterprises (IWAISE'08) Constantine, Algeria, April 9-20, 2008 <http://www.lifl.fr/iwaise08/cfp.html>
- IFAC TC 5.3 "Enterprise Integration and Networking" (<http://www.ifact-tc53.org>), together with the INTEROP-VLab (<http://www.interop-vlab.eu>) are organizing sessions at the next IFAC World Congress (<http://www.ifac2008.org>), Seoul, July 06-11, 2008.

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Find more events on our INTEROP-VLab website!

[www.interop-vlab.eu](http://www.interop-vlab.eu)

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