

Announcement of the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Conference I-ESA25 - 26/28 March  
Berlin, GERMANY

# Interoperability for Enterprise Software & Applications

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## EDITORIAL

### INTEROP-VLab enters orbit

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



Founded in March 2007 in Brussels as a Not-for-profit International Association under the Belgian law (AISBL), INTEROP-VLab is rapidly extending its membership and deploying its activity.

An important step in the launch process of the VLab was the 1st Extraordinary General Assembly held on 26-27 September in Brussels, behind the scenes of the special event (also reported in this Newsletter) organised to publicise the legal creation of INTEROP-VLab.

The implementation of the two-level organisation, i.e. a wide network of regional Poles in Europe and beyond co-ordinated by INTEROP-VLab AISBL, can already be considered as very satisfactory. Beyond the four founding members (UK Pole, German Pole, Grand Sud-Ouest French Pole and China Pole) the General Assembly has indeed approved the extension of the membership, adding two new Poles (Spanish Pole, Portuguese Pole) from Sept. 2007.

In addition, an Italian Pole as well as two transnational Poles (Norway/Sweden and Luxemburg/Belgium/France) are finalised and will be able to apply within the next few weeks, whilst a Greek Pole is under development.

The launch of INTEROP-VLab is doubtless a success and the estimated figure after one year of existence (March 2008) is up to 12 Poles, 100 partner organisations and 500 researchers.

Having now entered orbit, INTEROP-VLab will be able during 2008 to deploy activities aiming to fulfil its missions: i) to promote the Enterprise Interoperability domain and act as a reference, ii) to contribute to the ERA in the domain, iii) to develop Education and Training, iv) to promote innovation in industrial and public systems.

## FOCUS ON

**THE OFFICIAL PRESENTATION OF INTEROP-VLab in Brussels, September 26th, 2007,  
At the headquarters of INTEROP-VLab, Bureau Aquitaine Europe, Brussels  
by Keith Popplewell, General Secretary, INTEROP-VLab**



This event was held to launch INTEROP-VLab in Brussels, and especially to introduce it to the main interested European Commission personnel. It was attended by Gerald Santucci, Head of Unit, Peter Fatelnig, Deputy Head of Unit, and Joel Bacquet, Research Programme Officer. The evening opened with an introduction from INTEROP-VLab's president, Jean-Paul Bourrières, preceding a welcome speech from Mrs Marie-Pierre Mesplède, representing Mr. Alain Rousset, President of Regional Council of Region Aquitaine, which kindly hosted the INTEROP-VLab's headquarters in Brussels.

**INTEROP-VLab Poles attending**

**Full members:-**

INTEROP-VLab GSO Pole (France)  
INTEROP-VLab DFI Pole (Germany)  
INTEROP-VLab China Pole  
INTEROP-VLab UK Pole  
INTEROP-VLab INTERVAL (Spain)  
INTEROP-VLab PtRP Pole (Portugal)

**Observer members:-**

INTEROP-VLab Italian Pole  
INTEROP-VLab Greek Pole  
INTEROP-VLab North Pole  
INTEROP-VLab Grand Region Pole  
(France, Belgium & Luxembourg)

Then Mr. Santucci, the Commission Head of Unit for Enterprise Networking, gave a presentation, reported in full elsewhere in the newsletter, followed by short presentations from each of the INTEROP-VLab Poles, including both full and observer members attending the INTEROP-VLab Extraordinary General Assembly taking place the same day and the next.



Round Table discussion with (from left to right): M. Missikoff (IASI CNR), J. Bacquet (European Commission), P. Fatelnig (European Commission), R. Poler (Univ. Polytechnic of Valencia), C. Piddington (Cimmedia), M. Zelm (Cimosa), G.Santucci (European Commission) and G. Doumeingts (GFI)

Finally a round table discussion led by Mr. Guy Doumeingts, Emeritus Professor of University Bordeaux 1, consultant at GFI and General Manager of INTEROP-VLab, reviewed the history of 7 years of research in Enterprise Interoperability, the results which have arisen and the ways forward.

**Special Invited Talk during the INTEROP-VLab event in Brussels  
by Gérald Santucci, Head of Unit, Information Society and Media D.G.,  
Networked Enterprise & Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)**



Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for having invited us to be with you on this special day! I am grateful for this honour, and proud to share some of your ideals and expectations.

I would like first to congratulate all the partners of the INTEROP-VLab, which was launched on March 16, 2007. I also wish to extend my thanks to the pioneers who in 2002 were the pathfinders in this development, namely the people involved in the IDEAS Thematic Network.

I think that this meeting should have a round of applause for all the skilled, dedicated and talented people who made possible this initiative.

I especially commend Guy Doumeingts, whom I had the privilege to know well in his capacity of advisor of the Network of Excellence INTEROP, Emeritus Professor at University Bordeaux I and, of course, promoter of the INTEROP-VLab initiative, for his stupendous work, sometimes invisible yet very effective indeed. In truth, it's impossible to forget that Guy is an extraordinary entrepreneur. I am happy to sing the praises of a man who, among other things, has piloted several large European projects in the areas of enterprise management

and enterprise modelling technology, has published some 150 articles and three books, and since 1991 has been in charge of joint projects between China-Europe governments in the field of computer integration production.

I also thank the representatives of the four poles from Germany, United Kingdom, France and China, which have been the "founding fathers" of the INTEROP-VLab.

Thank you, Jean-Paul Bourrières, for your leadership as INTEROP-NoE Project Manager on interoperability and the many challenges facing the INTEROP-VLab today. We owe you the fact that the INTEROP is probably the first Network of Excellence to have created a structure for developing and exploiting the experience and the knowledge gained over the past three years and half. I am proud that Europe continues to be a leader on Enterprise Interoperability.

We are proud that thanks to the INTEROP-NoE, Europe sets high standards for a de-fragmented European Research Area in this field while cooperating with other regions of the world, and that existing and future research laboratories are offered each year more and more opportunities to work in close connection with industry. This much welcomed initiative contributes to meet the challenge of Enterprise Interoperability in Europe. It reflects the commitment of the networked regional poles to accept and promote the new spirit that has taken hold in Europe in the wake of the INTEROP Network of Excellence: a new sense of community, a new willingness and pledge to develop common strategies for advancing research in Enterprise Interoperability, a new understanding that the public sector and the private sector are all in this together, also a new recognition of the catalytic role of the European Commission, and finally a new readiness on the part of the actors to take a multidisciplinary approach by merging the three areas of Architecture & Platforms, Enterprise Modelling, and Ontology.

Let me now share with you a few short reflections. Firstly, the INTEROP-VLab represents the first initiative of that sort at European level. Therefore, it is expected to become the "memory context" of all research activities that will be carried out in the domain of Enterprise Interoperability throughout Europe and internationally.

We would even like to suggest that the INTEROP-VLab, thanks to its image of academic neutrality, become the official knowledge repository of all public deliverables of the Enterprise Interoperability projects funded by the European Commission. The access given to such massive knowledge in one single point would, in our view, be a valuable asset for the VLab as it would drag a lot of traffic on its Web site. I am ready to discuss with Jean-Paul Bourrières the modalities for implementing this idea.

Anyway, the successful start of the INTEROP-VLab deserves cheerful acknowledgements indeed but it also yields special responsibilities. Your enterprise must not fail. The stakes are too high. Therefore, all partners will have to remain strongly committed and the Board of Directors, supported by a Scientific Committee, to do an outstanding job by maintaining cohesion, consistency and effectiveness all along the working trail.

Secondly, you cannot allow yourselves to be cast as mere defenders of the status quo. The INTEROP-VLab initiative must be one powerful instrument for defining a European vision of the research laboratory of the future. This vision should include a continuing commitment to provide what has been promised – a Collaborative Space for researchers from academia and industry, a Collaborative Platform for research, a Knowledge Map using the most advanced results in Ontology, a Virtual Library, a Mobility Programme among the partners, facilities to devise new projects in the domain of Enterprise Interoperability, and an ambitious Education Program with tutorials, courses and masters on Enterprise Interoperability.

The INTEROP-VLab will represent a leap forward in technology, education, and cooperation. But, if I may, it should also respect the enduring principles that expanded memorisation since antiquity. Indeed, as storage space on computer chips increases, human data storage decreases. Given the rise of Web search engines, facts that used to be reliably in our brains are now at our fingertips, if we can remember our passwords yet... Oration and recitation, once staples of the European school system, have largely been phased out; rhetoric programs at universities have narrowed or been eliminated.

So let me say that the INTEROP-VLab should strive to reconcile tradition and modernity. We need in Europe an agenda that has the capability to meet and master the challenges of the 21st century, that re-ignites the European dream of human progress for all people, and not just some, and that convinces people that owing to new technology we know the way ahead. This is an ambitious agenda by any standard – but with your help and commitment we can all make it happen.

Thirdly, the INTEROP-VLab arrives at a timely moment. It is a development that combines the entrepreneurial spirit of SMEs with the needs of researchers, be they professionals or students. That's a kind of ideal mix: the creative impulse and the academic knowledge. Your initiative can be expected to lay the basic conceptual, technological, and organisational foundations of Enterprise Interoperability in Europe in the 21st century.

Furthermore, the INTEROP-VLab should take advantage of two recent interrelated developments in the ICT theme of the 7th Framework RTD Programme:

1. on the one hand, the Enterprise Interoperability Research Roadmap which the European Commission, together with many interested stakeholders and European projects in the field of Enterprise Interoperability, has published in July 2006 and intends to revisit and update on a regular basis;
2. on the other hand, the Value Proposition for Enterprise Interoperability which supports one aspect of the Roadmap by addressing the long-lasting issue of the lack of a business case for Enterprise Interoperability.

Fourthly, you must be aware and accept that the road to success will be strewn with a succession of hardships and difficult challenges. In an era of economic angst like this one, it's hard to resist the urge to make quick fixes. But when we are surrounded by difficulties and it's tough to see the way forward, let's remember that the genius of the system we've developed is our greatest hope. I'm sure my friends Guy Doumeingts and Jean-Paul Bourrières understand what I mean. One among many of the problems with trying to have a rational discussion about interoperability is that many people want to believe what's convenient rather than what's accurate. Believing, after all, requires so much less effort than thinking! This points out to the need to learn patience and to remain steadily committed for bringing stakeholders together, catching a glimpse of success, and contemplating the prospect of tangible achievements.

Last but not least, one of the main strengths of the INTEROP-VLab is its openness to foreign experiences. You know that the Chinese pole is one of the four founders of the VLab. We are happy here that the VLab builds a bridge over the geographies of land, knowledge and culture. It brings together people and organisations that share the same passion and have similar expectations for research and researchers. I hope that cooperation between European teams and Chinese teams will continue in the future. On one hand, this cooperation is necessary to reach excellence in research through availability of samples, accessibility to more data, consideration of global environmental problems, access and proximity to market, standards expansion, etc. On the other hand, it enables better cross-fertilisation in research by bringing together the most internationally recognised and respected researchers and teams.

Taking the moon's perspective, I'd like to recall that two thousands five hundred years ago, Confucius was the first teacher in China who wanted to make education available to all men and who was instrumental in establishing the art of teaching as a vocation, indeed as a way of life. He was the first person to devote his whole life to learning and teaching for the purpose of transforming and improving society. He believed that all human beings could benefit from self-cultivation. He opened the doors of education to all, and defined learning not merely as the acquisition of knowledge but also as character building. As he had to face the power holders of the time and political frustration, Confucius remained always an heroic conscience – a profile in courage, as President John F. Kennedy would have said – who knew realistically that he might not succeed but, fired by a righteous passion, continuously did the best he could. His message resonates today – not just for the school children in China but for all of us as adults, too. I have no doubt that the Chinese pole will continue to stimulate the INTEROP VLab and help bring it to success.

But I hope that it will also share with the European poles the lessons of courage, commitment and dedication that Confucius passed on us. Together, we can live up to that ideal. We can make a real and lasting difference for all the researchers from academia and industry on Enterprise Interoperability. I'm convinced that we're just getting started and the best is yet to come.

Thank you for all you do so well.

**INTERVIEW****Guy Doumeingts (INTEROP-VLab General Manager) presents the activities of INTEROP-VLab****By Cathy Lieu, Assistant Manager INTEROP-VLab**

**Cathy Lieu: Prof. Doumeingts, INTEROP-VLab is created since March 2007. As General Manager of INTEROP-VLab, what have been the activities performed since the creation?**

Guy Doumeingts: the first action was to apply to the Belgian Administration, to acquire the legal status of AISBL (international non-profit making association), given by royal decree. INTEROP-VLab received the legal status on April, 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

In parallel, the INTEROP-VLab's administrators were also busy with the end of the INTEROP-NoE project, until the beginning of June.

The other important task was to prepare the first Extraordinary General Assembly, held in Brussels on 26-27 September, 2007, and also to create and to launch the activities among the various committees of INTEROP-VLab. Actually, INTEROP-VLab has really started from the EGA meeting.

**Cathy Lieu: What is the work of the INTEROP-VLab's committees?**

Guy Doumeingts: There are four committees in INTEROP-VLab.

- The first goal of the Scientific Committee is to propose to the General Assembly and to the board the scientific strategy to develop INTEROP-VLab. The second goal is to contribute to the update of the Roadmap in Enterprise Interoperability. To support the chairperson, Dr M. Missikoff, the Board of INTEROP-VLab has created a "Scientific Coordination Group" composed of M. Missikoff (IASI CNR, Italy), R. Jochem (Universität Kassel, Germany), A. Berre (Sintef, Norway), K. Popplewell (Coventry University, England) and G. Doumeingts (University Bordeaux 1 and GFI, France). INTEROP-VLab has already produced two versions of the Scientific Agenda, which were delivered to the European Commission and to the main stakeholders. The Scientific Agenda is also available on the INTEROP-VLab portal ([www.interop-vlab.eu](http://www.interop-vlab.eu)) and it will be regularly published. The Scientific Committee continues to work on the update of the EI Roadmap until the end of January.
- The Education Committee has launched two important activities: the preparation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the European Master in Enterprise Interoperability and the elaboration of three vocational courses based on the previous work done during the INTEROP-NoE project:
  1. Methods to elaborate Specifications of Enterprise Interoperability Problems
  2. Development of EI solutions using MDI approach and SOA techniques
  3. e-Government interoperability.
- The Industrial forum is strongly preparing the next INTEROP-VLab event, organized at University of Coventry (UK).
- The Standardisation Group has started to review the existing standards in Enterprise Interoperability.

**Cathy Lieu: what is the programme of work for 2008?**

Guy Doumeingts: we will continue the work initialised, that is to say the preparation of the UK Pole's event, the preparation of I-ESA 08, the consolidation of the scientific programme.

The other important task will consist in promoting the main Interop results, as regards the KMap (negotiations have started with several administrative and industrial potential users) and the courses in Enterprise Interoperability (EI). INTEROP-VLab is also launching new projects in the EI domain.

On the other hand, two working groups have been launched: the PRP working group (Platform Renovation Project) which aims to propose a new platform for the end of 2008, and the KMap working group to promote the use of the KMap and to work on the enhancement of the tool.

## The Cooperations of INTEROP-VLab

by Guy Doumeingts, INTEROP-VLab General Manager

### IMS Seminar : Strategy for Global Manufacturing, a European view for IMS, Zürich, 15-16 November, 2007

The seminar organised jointly by EU and the Swiss IMS Secretariats, at the Swiss federal University of Technology (ETH), aimed to facilitate discussion amongst European Experts on Global Manufacturing R&D in particular on the new strategy of the Intelligent Manufacturing System (IMS) initiative.

INTEROP-VLab was associated to this event by his General Manager, Prof. Guy Doumeingts and several members. Five sessions were organised, one dedicated to "Global Manufacturing Interoperability and Standards" coordinated by Guy Doumeingts.

The presentations of this event are available under: <http://cordis.europa.eu/ims/src/event-2007.htm>

### Cluster Meeting in Enterprise Interoperability organised by the G. Santucci's unit, Information Society and Media D.G, organised in Brussels on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

The goal of this meeting was to contribute to the revision of the Existing Roadmap in Enterprise Interoperability. Interop-VLab has contributed by the supply of the Second Scientific Agenda.

INTEROP-VLab platform will support the discussion among the experts during the next month: a forum has been open at [http://interop-vlab.eu/Discussion\\_Forums](http://interop-vlab.eu/Discussion_Forums), on which the experts of Enterprise Interoperability will express their opinion.

In the same line we announce that the INTEROP-VLab Platform will welcome all the public deliverables of FP6 and FP7 in the domain of EI, in free access. Anyway, a service will be proposed to the EI Community: to search information using the INTEROP-VLab Knowledge Map (I-V\_KMap) in order to retrieve very quickly the needed information.

## INTEROP-VLab News

### Download the flyer of INTEROP-VLab, on the portal [www.interop-vlab.eu](http://www.interop-vlab.eu)!

For promoting INTEROP-VLab among future partners, we have designed a brief document presenting the structure, the activities and services provided by INTEROP-VLab.

### Know more about the INTEROP-VLab Poles

You can find now on the INTEROP-VLab Portal, the description of the Poles members of INTEROP-VLab, with the list of partners by poles and the contact if you are interested to join it!

### How to access to the INTEROP-VLab Portal?

You can access the portal at [www.interop-vlab.eu](http://www.interop-vlab.eu), and see announcements, next events, and very soon, you will be able to upload the public deliverables from the Enterprise Interoperability Clusters!

If you are member of INTEROP-VLab, after signing with your login and password, you can access more functionalities and services: use of the KMap, the IEKR, the collaborative workspaces, forums...

## The INTEROP-VLab Event Cycle (IVEC)

INTEROP-VLab proposes series of events in the domain of Enterprise Interoperability (EI):

- Since 2005, the International Conference I-ESA (Interoperability for Enterprise Systems and Applications), organised annually. This event is a major one in EI. The 4<sup>th</sup> edition will be organised in Berlin by IPK Fraunhofer, on March 26<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> 2008 (see article page 7).

The 5<sup>th</sup> edition will be organised in 2010, March 22<sup>nd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, as the management of INTEROP-VLab has decided to space out the frequency to each two years, due to the investment for organising such an event. INTEROP-VLab will supply the Specification Book in order to launch a call for the organisation of I-ESA 10.

- Additionally, INTEROP-VLab is creating the INTEROP-VLab Event Cycle (IVEC): in turn, the 10 poles will organise a local event, each three or two months. The pole has in charge to define the programme according to the local interest, to invite speakers and to promote the event.

The next local event will be organised by the UK Pole on 24-25 January 2008. The following Local Event will be organised in Portugal on June 25<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> 2008 combined with the General Assembly organised on June 24<sup>th</sup>.

The INTEROP-VLab Event Cycle (IVEC):

	Local event organised by	details	Date
1.	INTEROP-VLab UK Pole	Open Pole meeting at Coventry University, UK, to present UK Pole strategy and to develop Pole membership. However ALL INTEROP-VLab partners will be most welcome to participate. Details to be announced shortly – see the INTEROP-VLab portal	24-25 January 2008
2.	<b>The Portuguese Pole</b>	combined with INTEROP-VLab General assembly	25-26 June 2008
3.	<b>The PGSO</b>	combined with the INTEROP-VLab Extraordinary General assembly	16-17 October 2008
4.	<b>The China Pole</b>		January 2009
5.	<b>The Spanish Pole INTERVAL</b>		17-18 March 2009
6.	<b>The Grande Région Pole</b>	combined with the INTEROP-VLab General assembly	mid of June 2009
7.	<b>The Italian Pole</b>		October 2009
8.	<b>Greek Pole</b>	combined with the INTEROP-VLab Extraordinary General assembly	December 2009
9.	<b>To be defined</b>	The I-ESA 2010 Conference, 5 <sup>th</sup> edition	March 2010
10.	<b>The German Pole DFI</b>	combined with the INTEROP-VLab General assembly	June 2010
11.	<b>The North Pole</b>		October 2010

These meetings are open with registration. If you are interested to participate, to receive more details contact: [info@interop-vlab.eu](mailto:info@interop-vlab.eu)

## I-ESA '08 : Interoperability for Enterprise Software and Applications Berlin - Conference 26-28 March 2008 – Pre-conference 25 March 2008

By Thomas Knothe, chairman of the I-ESA 08 organizing committee



Under the headline “Science meets Industry” Interoperability Experts, Researchers and Business Users will meet for the I-ESA’08 conference in Berlin. From 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> of March Executive Speakers from Industry and Research will guide through the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference initiated in 2005 by two major European research projects of the 6th Framework R&D (Interop NoE and ATHENA IP). In the I-ESA 08 arena the industry will point out the difficulties encountered in their business life and show the way taken to solve those problems while interrelate with other organizations sharing experience.

Starting with the workshop and Doctoral symposium day special topics of Enterprise interoperability will be discussed in detail like Interoperability Standardisation, Tutorials for Model driven Architecture or semantic mediation. The following three days are littered by newest research results according to speeches about the interoperability industrial challenges held by industry Experts.

High level Keynotes from European Commission, Research, Industry and Vendors will guide the entire conference.

Keynotes from Gerald Santucci (European Commission), Frank Leymann (University Stuttgart), Rainer Klingemayer (BMW), Degang Cui (Chinese Aviation industry)



Find more information on the website: [www.i-esa.org](http://www.i-esa.org)

## Calendar of next events

- I-ESA 2008 Conference, the Fourth International Conference on Interoperability for Enterprise Software and Applications, 26 – 28 March 2008 – Pre-conference 25 March 2008, in Berlin, Sponsored by INTEROP-VLab, [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 [www.lifl.fr/iwaise08/cfp.html](http://www.lifl.fr/iwaise08/cfp.html)
- EMMSAD'08, the Thirteenth International Workshop on Exploring Modeling Methods in Systems Analysis and Design Montpellier, France, 16-17 June, 2008, held in conjunction with CAISE'08 . Sponsored by INTEROP-VLab, [www.emmsad.org](http://www.emmsad.org)
- IFAC TC 5.3 "Enterprise Integration and Networking" ([www.ifac-tc53.org](http://www.ifac-tc53.org)), together with the INTEROP-VLab ([www.interop-vlab.eu](http://www.interop-vlab.eu)) are organizing sessions at the next IFAC World Congress ([www.ifac2008.org](http://www.ifac2008.org)), Seoul, July 06-11, 2008.

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Find more events on the INTEROP-VLab website!  
[www.interop-vlab.eu](http://www.interop-vlab.eu)

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