EERA Archives, Networks and Policy

This account of the development of EERA is based upon the work of its Council [Meeting Agendas, Minutes, tabled papers and AGA reports] from its first meeting in November 1994 until September, 2008.

The work of the EERA Council has had certain consistencies from its early days, and these are represented in its Agenda and Minutes as a recurring set of items. These consistencies and repetitions began to construct this Report, and they may briefly be described as its membership and associations, its office and officers, its finances, its conference and organization, and its communications. An overarching issue, which crises of one kind or another seem often to disrupt, was a need to understand and act within European educational research policy. This was one of the most important issues facing the founders of EERA, a reason for the creation of EERA, and yet in the early years, it was often displaced by the problems of financing an office and organizing a conference. The Report creates a narrative, based on original documents, in the form of a case history or record.

The Report begins with a short account of its Foundation in the early 1990s, a period which has had to be reconstructed from various other sources, including the parallel Interview Series undertaken for the same project. There are a number of major sections to the Report and each of them follows a chronology based upon their appearance in the Council documents.

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Note: references in the text refer to the meeting or document from which the statements were drawn viz Hamburg Sept 2003. Usually this means the time and place of the EERA Council meeting.
1. Founding the Association

Before there was an EERA, there was an ECER. This was an unexpected finding. The first European Conference on Educational Research took place in 1992, two years before the foundation of the EERA in Strasbourg in 1994. The ECER took place at the University of Twente through the initiative of Dutch education researchers, especially Prof Tjeerd Plomp. It had been proposed that the 10th annual conference of the Dutch association, the VOR (Vereniging voor Onderwijs Research) should, in the year of the signing of the EU Maastricht Treaty, be a European conference as well as a national one. The ECER92 letter of invitation, sent out widely across Europe, mentions the creation of the Single European Act [which now included education policy] and that a ‘new educational policy is emerging in Europe’ and educational research needs to ‘broaden its perspective’. At the time there were few comparative studies on European educational research and educational research was included in the ‘Targeted Socio-Economic Research’ (TSER) programme, initiated in 1994, for the first time. It was an opportune time to create a European association.

Additional funding to support the ECER was found when the European Commission was approached to support the Conference and instead of a direct grant, offered to pay for a feasibility study on the state of educational research in Europe. Plomp prepared a report for the EC Task Force on Education, which evaluated the idea of an EERA or RECHERCHE and its different possible structures, in response to the Commission’s interest in ‘whether and under what conditions educational researchers from the member countries can be brought together’. Twenty five researchers, a panel of experts, were consulted; they were drawn by Plomp from his contacts in the IEA International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement] of which he was Chair, and an appendix of national and European research associations and contacts was added [for example, EARLI, CIDREE etc]. The Report proposed an EC Bureau to support researchers and their associations and as a platform to approach researchers on behalf of the Commission. The ECER92 was intended to represent some of the proposals in the Report such as starting to form a European association and creating a ‘market for research’ [showing national associations and their work].

Domenico Lenarduzzi, the director of the EC Taskforce addressed the ECER. The ECER in June 22-25 1992 was a success with 700 academics attending; 500 papers presented and a three volume book of summaries [pp1308] was produced later. Some of the main actors in ECER92 became leading members of ECER in later years, for example, Jan Van den Akker, Martin Mulder, Jules Pieters, and Tjeerd Plomp himself.
Plomp had issued a special invitation to approximately 20 educational researchers to attend an informal meeting during the ECER92 to discuss the merits and desirability of setting up a European association in the field of educational research. This meeting was attended by 21 people from 10 countries (Belgium, England, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland, Switzerland, Spain, Czech Republic and Hungary); some were representatives of national educational research organizations, others were affiliated to a specialised association active in the area of educational research (Consortium of Higher Education Research/CHER, Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe/CIDREE, European Association for Institutional Research/EAIR, European Association for Learning and Instruction/EARLI, International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement/ICSEI). The meeting discussed Plomp’s Report; they discussed the fact that the organization of educational research was still inadequate in several European countries, and, on the other hand, that international associations specialising in sub-areas of educational research did not seem to be willing or interested in joining an umbrella organization spanning the entire discipline; and they encouraged the European Commission to set up a Bureau of Education Research. Apparently, there was a difference of opinion between the national and the specialized associations about the value of having an EERA. The meeting decided to establish ‘an association of national associations of educational researchers’; they will work with existing international associations – like EARLI; they will assist countries with ‘weak or no infrastructure’; and they will not replace national conferences. Eight national representatives met again at the ECER and intended to meet early 1993 in Switzerland; they were from the UK, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Hungary, Czech Republic and the Netherlands.

A second meeting of ‘Representatives of National Associations for Research in Education in European Countries’ was held on 14-15th October 1993, in Aarau, Switzerland, and was organized by Armin Gretler, the Director of the Swiss Coordination Centre for Education Research. This meeting was ‘formal and binding’ and delegates were official representatives of their associations or institutes: 19 people from 15 countries attended from a list which included Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and Council of Europe and OECD/CERI. They decided to form an EERA quickly for several reasons: that strong associations should help the weak through exchange and transfer; that Europe was moving from uncoordinated to coherent activity in research; a need for an umbrella organization rather than specialized or area specific associations; the Council of Europe and the OECD asked for a single
organization across the whole of education research; and Eastern Europe needed to be brought into the fold.

The second meeting spent its time trying to discuss the nature and purpose of proposed EERA, its relations with central and eastern states in Europe, creating a Journal, training for researchers, organizing cross national research projects, improving research ethics and the public profile of educational research. It established a working group to found the EERA on 18th June 1994 [in Strasbourg] and to organize a foundation ceremony at ECER 95 Bath [organized with BERA], UK.

The key discussions were on the relation between EERA and other associations and agencies, and the internal question of membership categories. At the time, EERA was conceived of as an ‘umbrella’ organization, an over arching and facilitating body, with membership drawn from specialized associations [in Adult Education or like EARLI] and from intergovernmental organizations [European Community, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. If they were not to become members of this ‘umbrella’ organization, then EERA would have an obligation to cooperate and communicate with them. Institutes and individuals would become EERA members if they were members of their national or a specialized association. Another category, individual members, was created to allow individuals in countries without national associations to join and later widened to include countries that did have national associations. It was decided to consider having three models of individual membership: members from national and specialized associations which came under the ‘umbrella’; members from these associations and other institutes; and these categories plus other individuals. A later vote on membership and proposed activities reveals a differences of opinion ie 17 votes were cast in favour of including the above list of specific activities in the Articles of Association, and 11 votes were cast against it [Gretler p177].

Another Working Group was set up which met at DiPF in Frankfurt in April 1994: the group included Gretler, Pretceille [France], Calderhead [UK], Ekholm [Sweden], Paiva Campos [Portugal], Prucha [Czech] plus Plomp, Black [SCRE Scotland] and a DiPF member, nominated by Mittler, Dobrich. Armin Gretler had organized this meeting and had already consulted with the larger group on the organization of EERA: on banking, office support, differences with EARLI, and the constitution. In fact, ‘a majority’ of the wider group were in favour of the Working Group constituting the first Executive Committee’. A set of 21 Nomination Forms for Chair and Executive of EERA were produced and although a majority favoured Gretler as Chair, he
proposed Calderhead who had volunteered to manage the next ECER at Bath, UK. A letter from Gretler [6th May, 1994] mentioned that membership would be mainly from national associations but membership would be open to research institutions; differential rates were proposed for the East; and Netherlands, Spain and Slovenia added representatives to the Executive. Gretler gave the Opening Address at Strasbourg and Calderhead became EERA Chair.

Again, it was Gretler who produced invitations to the EERA Foundation Meeting in Strasbourg 18th June, 1994 at the Louis Pasteur University, hosted by the Faculty of Education Sciences. He wrote a series of letters inviting such guests as Landsheere, Massangioli [EC], Tuijnman [OECD], and Vorbreck [Council of Europe]. He received a Commentary, a letter from Debeauvais on EERA and a Note from the Council of Europe about the Foundation meeting. Attendees signed the Foundation of EERA Document.

The first Executive Committee [Annex 1] met on the 19th June, 1994 between 9-2.30 in Strasbourg. In essence, it had to decide on every aspect of the new Association: it discussed its legal status, the roles of its Executive Members [Secretary, Treasurer, other Portfolios] and their length of office; the offer of support for an EERA Secretariat in Edinburgh at SCRE; the proposed EERA Newsletter; the offer from Swets and Zeitlinger that EERA adopt their Journal, Educational Research and Evaluation; the Call for Papers for the Bath ECER95; and the recruitment and structure of EERA’s divisions or Special Interest Groups. It was decided to become a charity although they also considered returning to the other options [limited company and European Interest group]. They began to compile a list of European associations and Institutes of Educational Research and to write to them formally inviting them to join; they expected that some associations would aim to become formal Special Interest Groups in EERA. They also considered the need to have a professional development function (ie disseminating new methodological procedures, such as the statistical modelling techniques, computer-based qualitative research systems), a policy function (developing ideas and a policy document on research ethics or on quality in educational research) or meetings that bring together researchers and policy-makers on specific current areas of education.

Creating an Office was difficult as it was unclear what resources would be needed to manage an unknown volume of activities. An initial draft mentioned a database of members, an EERA information package, establishing a bank account and possibly publishing a Newsletter. In the early days, BERA managed the first ECER at Bath95: the theme for the ECER was ‘Educational Research in Europe: relating theory, policy and practice’. One of the first acts of EERA was to encourage Armin Gretler to construct and publish an overview of educational research in
Europe. It was suggested that this would be based on questionnaire returns from National Educational Research Associations which would be asked to outline the structure of research in their own countries

For the first few years of the EERA, its Agenda was formed out of the original concerns about its office, conference, communications etc. The next meetings contained the following items

**Executive Committee Minutes 19th Nov 1994 Frankfurt**
- Secretariat and EERA Bank Account
- EERA Recruitment
- ECER95 Report
- EERA overview of European Ed Research
- EERA newsletter
- EERA Journal
- Future EERA Conferences
- EERA Special Meetings
- Roles of Executive members
- EERA logo

**Executive Committee Agenda March 1995 Ljubljana**
- Treasurer’s Business and Membership Report
- ERE Journal report
- EERA Bulletin Report
- Future EERA Conferences
- Structure of EERA [establishment of Divisions]
- Future Elections to Executive

Many of these items were included in the ‘Targets for Coming Year’. From this point, each key Agenda item had an accompanying set of notes. They represent a template for most future Council meetings and its continuing problematic areas.
2. EERA Council

From the beginning, there was uncertainty about the number of members on Council, and the problems of representing European associations fully. France, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Netherlands, Portugal, Czech Republic, Slovenia, and the UK wished to increase the number of Council members from 12 to 16 and generally assumed that they would stay in office for two years [Bath, 16th & 17th September 1995]. There was uncertainty about what would happen if more than 4 people were nominated, for example, should the Council hold an election for places? The Scottish auditors report suggested that there were problems with the uncertain terms of office and other items in the Constitution. This was complicated by the still unresolved problem of types of membership, and their representation on Council.

Discussion followed [May 96] on reserved Executive seats for the three different kinds of membership and a rotating obligation for an association to provide Committee members.

This uncertainty continued into the following year. The President [Dobrich] had extended the date for nominations to be received for Council; he was worried that there were too many nominations from the UK and felt action should be taken to rectify this. As there were too many nominations to fill the available vacancies from January 1998, there was discussion about what to do. Dieter Lenzen, the DERA representative, suggested a larger advisory board which met, say, once every 2 years which would enable people from more countries to contribute to EERA. [Frankfurt, 23 September 1997]. In the same year, Council considered whether the new Bulletin Editor should be a co-opted member. A new Officer post was created in 1998, the role of Secretary General, with a place on Council. For the next few years, the SG was focused on strengthening the organization of EERA – its networks, links with national associations and Brussels through Convenors and Executive Council members -

- support and strengthen its academic policy [purpose, refereeing
- shape alliances and possibly individual membership
- develop the communication policies of EERA
- organize events within ECER itself to make sure that European policy on research and the development of the European ‘space’
- Website -refocussed on the policies, programmes and practices of educational research in Europe and linked to Bulletin

The SG post increased the number of members on Council who had organizational responsibility, apart from the President and the Treasurer: it was now assumed that the President would have responsibility for the external relations of EERA, and the SG responsibility for its internal affairs. [Ljubljana Sept 1998]

The first Presidential Report [from Sverker Lindblad] [May Edinburgh 1999] included a section on Ideas for the Future:
'In the EERA we should work to get in contact with existing research associations in Europe. Our ambition is to create a working communication network with all national and regional education research associations [such as BERA and the Finnish Society for Educational Research] in Europe. There is a need to develop a register of these organizations and a plan for contacting them. Furthermore we should develop a register of "profiled" education research associations (such as CESE and EARLI).

He drew attention to international research funding and research using organizations and suggested that one of the reasons for the creation of the EERA was the need to have an organizational counterpart to the international organizations, such as the OECD and EU.

So, in March Martin Lawn and I visited Brussels at a STRATA meeting in order to listen to the EU plans concerning research networks and research co-operation. Among other things we considered writing a proposal to the EU in order to improve the work of EERA in terms of international co-operation.

In 1999, as 5 vacancies had to be filled on the Council a discussion took place regarding procedures for election: in the absence of a new plan for elections, it was agreed that all associations should be re-elected (Portugal, Germany, The Netherlands and Slovenia) [Sec Gen Sept 1999 Lahti]. It was not just a question of numbers but of responsibilities on Council. Council members operate as national and association representatives; their main obligation is to attend the Council meetings. They have no functions in EERA directly although they are responsible for its policy making. Some of the Council members represent associations which cannot afford to send them to meetings, in effect they are silenced and silent in EERA Council and not a significant resource for the development of the EERA [Sec Gen Report May 2000]. In the following year, it was decided that each Council member should have a function in relation to key EERA tasks: this would be reported on at each meeting and notified on the website. EERA Review 1998 – 2001. The following organization was suggested –

*Three distinct models for the EERA Council organization*

- EERA council members are primarily representatives of their national associations. Only office bearers, the academic coordinator (with the secretary) and journal editor play major roles in managing EERA’s affairs.
- EERA council operates efficiently using a managerial model. Every council member has an individual portfolio of responsibility (like BERA).
- EERA council operates in a collegiate way. Its major functions are shared out and Council members opt to join small teams (like SERA).
A continuing problem was the lack of representation of parts of Europe and that there was no strategy for including them viz Italy, Greece, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria etc

**SecGen Report 2001**

A destabilizing crisis for the Council occurred in late 2001 as the President Elect, Fuensanta Hernandez- Pina, resigned her position: this mean that a new President had to be found quickly and that the next ECER, in Valencia, was withdrawn as a site.

The Council tried to establish procedures to work with Network Conveners, previously the SG had had informal meetings with Conveners during the ECER, but as they grew in number and theirs tasks became more complex, it was felt that a joint Council/ Convener meeting would be useful. The Conveners group wanted a regular annual meeting with Council following the problems with Lille ECER 2001. The Conveners also proposed that they have a representative at Council meetings. The Council agreed that this would be a good idea but stressed that any representative must be unanimously elected. It was proposed that the first Convenor representative could be elected in Hamburg ECER 2003 [AGA Lisbon 2002]. The cost of supporting the Conveners Representative on Council [travel etc] was to be met from EERA funds as they do not have a national association to fund their attendance at Council meetings. It was felt that having such a representative to raise Convenor issues at Council was a positive step [Hamburg Sept 2003].

The problem of non-participation in the work of some Council members was raised again in Council and it was suggested contacting the absentees to see why they did not attend. It was felt that perhaps some members did not attend as they do not have a clear idea of what it means to be on the Council. **Lisbon Sept 2002** A few years later, it was suggested that each Council member should volunteer to work with one or two networks [eg attend Business meetings etc] **Berlin June 2008**

The Council changed its Regulations in 2003 so that every national educational research association in Europe was able to nominate a representative to the Council. If necessary, a country could be represented by an educational research institute if there is not a national association and by agreement with EERA Council. The EERA would make sure to represent, either through election or by cooption, each eligible European country onto its Council. The period of office on Council will normally be three years. **[Glasgow May 2003]** This was stated again in 2005: every national association has a right to have a member sitting on the Council and where there is no national association, an institution can act as a de facto association. **Amsterdam June 2005.** A new principle was established in 2005 that
EERA would promote the start of an association by introducing an accession membership, which is possible for a maximum period of two years and at a special introduction fee (half price) **Dublin Sept 2005**

In 2007, the Council was concerned with the issue of EERA’s status as it moved from being a Scottish charity after the move to Berlin. The German Verein started on Jan 1st [2008].

Again the issue of Council continuity appeared; a successor has to be nominated for each Office bearer one year before their term ends: it was accepted that they should not have to be a representative of a national association **Berlin June 2007**

The Council focused on the PG Network, later to be the Emerging Researchers Net, and how it could be supported more strongly in future and how new structures could be developed for it ie conveners should be selected not elected [nominated by PGN Convenor and Senior Mentor][**Ghent September 2007**] and in turn, the PGN wanted Council members to be involved in reviewing the best papers for publication from the Pre-Conference. [**Goteborg Jan 2009**]

In recent years, the scientific work of the EERA, always important, has been a concern of Council as the organization has stabilized and strengthened. It was suggested that the Secretary General post be redefined to concentrate on scientific/academic issues and setting and maintaining standards; familiarity with the main academic discussions about educational research in Europe is important to the role **[Berlin June 2008]**. A new Scientific Committee, drawn from Council, was set up to suggest keynote nominations; it comprised the President, the Network Representative and the EERJ Editor [**Goteborg Jan 2009**]
3. EERA and its Associations

From its foundation, it was clear that the Council expected that other associations would join EERA and several European associations had written asking if they could develop links of some kind with EERA [these included the Association for Medical Education in Europe, European Research Network about Parents in Education, the European Curriculum Network - which became EERA Net 3]. Contact was made with EARLI and a meeting had been suggested to discuss the relationship between EERA and EARLI. Collaboration with EARLI could in the future take various forms: (i) exchange of information on conference dates and venues to avoid duplication; (ii) an invited EARLI symposium at the EERA conference and vice versa; (iii) possible joint Executive Committee meetings to discuss common interests. *[Bath, 16th & 17th September 1995]* Later in the year, ERNAPE [European Research Network About Parents in Education], ATEE [Association of Teacher Educators in Europe] and EARLI were considering EERA links, and EARLI proposed reciprocal sessions at each conference. *[Madrid December 1995]* CESE (Comparative Education Society in Europe) applied for membership of EERA *[Edinburgh May 1998]* and asked if it could constitute EERA’s research network for comparative education research *Jan 1998 Letter*. Working with AERA was suggested as it involved many European researchers and there had been communications between Presidents in 2000, and in the same year, relations with UNESCO were planned, via the VET, and a meeting was arranged with EU civil servants and the President/SG in Brussels *[President May 2000]* EERA/EARLI relations were a regular feature of Council discussions and the Officers tried on several occasions to build common ground with it; for example, the President wrote to the EARLI President expressing EERA’s wish to foster inter-organizational collaboration…. However, he did not receive a reply. It was agreed that, although each Association has a different focus, there could be greater co-operation between them. It was agreed to invite the EARLI President to ECER 2002 as a symbol of future co-operation. *[Glasgow June 2002]* In 2006, a discussion took place about the associations EERA should approach with the offer of a slot at ECER. Stefan Wolter proposed AEA Europe Association for Educational Assessment (http://www.aea-europe.net/) which he felt would be complementary to EERA’s networks. As it is a relatively small association, ECER could also prove a relevant platform for them to promote their association. Michael Uljens suggested the International Network for Philosophers of Education and will forward further details to the President. Earlier unsuccessful attempts to try to connect with EARLI were noted with regret. It was agreed that a final attempt at contact should be made. *Geneva Jan 2000* The SOROS Foundation was contacted as part of EERA’s wish to support the expansion of educational research across Eastern and Central Europe. SOROS would then encourage, through its agencies, the idea of setting up Educational Research associations and then EERA would ask the EU to fund the participation of representatives from
these countries at ECER. The benefit to EREA would be that new European Associations would be eligible to become members of EREA. **Glasgow June 2002**

Requests to join EREA had been received from the Icelandic Educational Research Association, the Educational Research Association of Ireland and the Austrian Association but the Greek National Association has not responded **Hamburg Sept 2003**

Constructive meetings with Italian and Polish delegates were held in 2006 **Geneva September 2006** and the following year, the absence of Greece and Poland as members was noted again but a meeting was organized at ECER with delegates from Hungary, Poland, and Roumania **Ghent September 2006**

The problem of Council members not paying or being able to pay their subscriptions, which would affect their representation on Council, was discussed, particularly in regard to Spain, Portugal and Lithuania.

Over the years, meetings at AERA appeared to lead to a series of formal discussions about a new form of collaboration. In 2003, AERA organized an Ad Hoc International Representatives meeting in Chicago, initiated by AERA’s executive director Felice Levine to encourage discussion of issues related to international research cooperation and collaboration [these were European -the Netherlands, Belgium, and United Kingdom- Canadian and Australian associations. At Chicago in 2007, a common declaration speaking of process, and not organization, was noted; this declaration took better account of cultural and organizational diversity .. existing in Europe in its draft. Discussion at EERA Council favoured collaboration in a virtual organization and not a new organization and structures **Berlin June 2007**

There was a general agreement that a global advisory body or another international conference was not required and was not part of EERA thinking about WERA **Berlin June 2008**

It was agreed that the EERA representative on WERA should not also be the representative of a national association and that a review of EERA participation will take place in 2012 [ a three year period from foundation] **Goteborg Jan 2009**

It was agreed to reduce fees for Australian delegates at ECER and in return, members of EERA (members of national Associations which are EERA members) would receive reduced fees at the conference of the Australian Association. It was also agreed that EERA would be offered a slot at AARE, and that the possibility of offering a time slot for the Australian Association at ECERS should be explored **Dublin Sept 2005**

Meetings with the US, Australia and Japanese associations were held at the ECER about future collaboration **Geneva September 2006**

A proposal to accept Turkey via TEASA as a member was made in **Berlin June 2008** and the President had contacted EENEE [European Expert Network on Economics of Education] to act as an ECER network **Berlin June 2008**
4. Membership

Although EERA depends on and works for its members, it has not always been clear who are its members. Initially, it was assumed that national associations and even research institutions would be members. By 1994, EERA had 9 associations, 10 institutes, 6 individuals as members [Paris June 1994]. By mid 1996, EERA had a total of 12 Associations, 31 institutes and 145 individuals as members and the following year, it had 13 Association members, 34 Institutions and 147 individual members. Even from its first ECER at Bath 1995, individual members began to ask for voting rights in the EERA Assembly. Again, in 1996, individual members asked for voting rights and after extensive discussion the Council decided to keep this issue under review. EERA had been set up as an organization principally of associations and institutions, and it was expected that individual members would be in the minority. However, it was an open question what was going to happen if it attracted a large number of individual members AGA September 1996

The problem of individual membership became linked to discussions about the ‘democratic deficit’ in EERA, although this referred to the problem that many members of the national associations were not aware of the fact that they were EERA members as well. In 200, it was said that

In sum, the EERA has still a long way to go when dealing with individual members of our organization. Here, we have three options:

A. To continue as an organization of organizations as now and accept the democracy deficit.

B. To change our constitution and make it possible for individual members to vote – e.g. by means of balloting.

C. To create a new organization of individual members that by means of this organization will have a more direct impact on the EERA and the decision-making in our organization

President Report May 2000

On the question of individual membership, it was agreed that for someone within the EU, the onus is on them to join their national association if affiliated to EERA. Only if they are from a country that does not have a national association or Institute affiliated to EERA should they be allowed to join as an individual member. Council also agreed that people living outside the EU should be allowed to join as individual members

Hamburg Sept 2003 However, this situation changed again a year later in Crete

EERA in essence is an association of national associations. So EERA should focus on national associations. But we also have institutes and individuals as a member, which we would like to change for a number of reasons. First of all, EERA is an association of national associations and EERA is carried by representatives of national associations. Therefore, EERA membership and its advantages should be restricted to these national associations and their members. By doing this we support the national associations and stimulate membership of national associations. There also are a number of practical reasons. Membership of individuals and institutes is not cost effective Treasurer AGA Dublin Sept 2005
The EERA office has a real problem with delegates not understanding the concept of EERA membership. Some people think that they automatically become a member if they have attended the previous ECER. Many others don’t know that membership of their own national association means they automatically qualify as an EERA member and get the reduced ECER fee. ..... We therefore have to add a clear explanation with respect to the membership structure of EERA. Amsterdam June 2005 As EERA is an association of associations, only association memberships will be permitted from 2006 onwards. Individual and Institutional membership will cease. In countries where there is no national association, assistance will be provided in the form of accession membership AGA Dublin September 2005

So, the initial attitude of the Council, to aid and assist European researchers wherever they were, began to cause difficulties for the Council and for individuals and institutes who joined EERA from its earliest days. The modern mantra of the EERA that it is ‘an association of national associations’ was not formally present at its foundation but began to appear over time. Recently, a further problem has surfaced: originally, its founders had the idea of national associations in mind, although the idea that there could be more than one national association has created the need to redefine the idea of the association again. Member Associations will be discussed as a separate item on all future agendas to allow Council to keep up to date with any progress. Geneva Jan 2006
5. Communications

From its foundation, the Council was concerned with the issue of communicating with its members, mainly the members in the national associations. It had organized a Bulletin or Newsletter from 1994. Organizing the Bulletin while trying to resolve a large range of issues within a tight budget and with few employees, became a big issue. It needed editors, agreed content and clear distribution. It was hoped that the first edition should be sent to all EERA members in the national associations although in future years, only a few copies would be sent out. 5000 copies of the first Bulletin [the old Newsletter] were distributed to the associations [Paris June 1994]. The Bulletin had an annual cost of £8000 a year [1997].

Even when the Bulletin could be produced well, it did not go to individual members, except in the case of one association, so it was if it didn’t exist. Following a weak financial situation after Frankfurt 97, the high costs of production and the limited distribution of the Bulletin it was discussed and a deadline of March 1998 was created at which its future would be decided [Ljubljana December 1997]. In 1998, 6,000 copies were produced and distributed to all national member associations, institutes and individual members. The original goal was distribution to all members and as the Bulletin was the communication medium of EERA, it would be beneficial to all these persons to receive it. This would raise the costs of production and dissemination significantly however. It was suggested that certain associations could add the Bulletin as an option service and bill their members for the cost of production [Sept 1998 Minutes Ljubljana].

In 2000 and 2001, efforts were made to improve the Bulletin: it had a name change to the European Educational Researcher, a new distribution plan, Network correspondents, and peer reviewing [there had been a lot of poor quality papers]. A concern is that the European scope of manuscripts is lacking in many instances [May 1999 Edinburgh].

The AGA at Bath95 mentioned the possibilities of the new Internet to contact members and a website was created by ECER98 [Ljubljana December 1997]. Two years later, SCRE’s web manager in the EERA Edinburgh Office produced a report on the development of the new EERA website: its future plans were dependent on Net12 to provide European research resources [they included Educational Research; Social Research; Information Gateways; Non-bibliographic Databases; Bibliographic Databases; Electronic Journals; Education Systems and Government Sites; European Union Gateways; Funding Agencies; Email Discussion Groups etc] [May Edinburgh 1999].

Within a short time, the website was seen as a major new resource for European researchers. Network 12 saw the use of the Internet as a means of offering structured access to information on educational research and of stimulating communication across the research community by exploiting the capability of the Internet (eg specialised links of sources, discussion forum, bulletin boards, address board, hypertext links etc).
An intended improvement in the coming year was email contact with members about EERA news including changes in the journal. Its main task had to be to inform members about research intelligence across Europe and in the EU. **SG Report May 2000** Over the coming years, this ambitious plan for the website seemed to founder on its change of web managers and server contracts, and the problems Net 12 had in offering the resources it wished to.

The EER and the EERA website were not the only ways of communicating with members. In 1997, an EERA Handbook of Educational Research in Europe was proposed, based on the Networks and three future ECERs; the intention was to develop a common European view/perspective on the state of educational research. The President [Calderhead] said it should represent

the state of the art of the discipline in different countries and articles should only be accepted which would have an impact and implications for current research **Edinburgh May 1997**

Each issue (produced perhaps every 5 years) would identify a series of key, topical areas where a review of research has something substantial to offer. Network Conveners would pass on to the Editors the four best contributions at the ECER conference and two would be published. **[AGA Ljubljana ECER 1998]**. The following year the idea had been revised somewhat, it would be an annual book created from best network papers **December 98 Lahti**. Eventually a Dutch publisher did publish a selection of ECER papers, edited by two ECER conveners which was sold at the ECER. In times of financial difficulty though, the Handbook had become problematic

. It would be very helpful if the organization will implement an individual membership policy that includes the yearbook (but then the price of the book needs to be low) or decides to include the price of the book in the conference fee. **Glasgow May 2000**

There was a fourth means of communication, this was the ECER Abstract database provided by the British Education Index, a member of Net 12. In fact, they provided in 1997 and from then on, a comparable online database of the ECER sessions, in effect a searchable Conference programme through the internet. Delegates could quickly locate authors, themes, or particular titles and check times, locations and abstracts as soon as those data were available in the main database. **Letter May 1997** This service was provided freely in the first two years and then a small charge was made for each entry. **December 1999** By 2007, the BEI EERA database contained 7500 ECER presentations in its online catalogue and 898 full text papers, with a profile of gradually increasing download of files [from 1600 downloads in 2000 to 24,000 in 2008]

It was hoped that with the breaking of the contract with the BEI, the newly adopted Conftool could integrate the BEI data into its database without disrupting amicable relation with BEI **Berlin June 2008**

A further means of communication was suggested but it didn’t develop.
As one means of raising public awareness of EERA's work, Ingrid proposed that a brief electronic newsletter might be produced about once every 6 weeks and mailed to members consisting of a single page of information containing a few items of news about relevant forthcoming events, news from the EU and on the latest educational research etc. with their URLs to give further information.

Amsterdam June 2005

Apart from the growing importance of the website in managing EERA’s information about itself, its networks and conferences, the most important other feature of its communications is its Journal, the European Educational Research Journal. Almost before the EERA was established it received a letter from Swets and Zeitlinger, publishers, asking EERA to adopt its new journal, Educational Research and Evaluation, as its official journal. This appears to have taken EERA Council by surprise, it had not had its own discussion about a Journal; it argued that it wanted more control over the editorial board, the title, the academic content and even the focus of the ERE [which tended to be more narrow than EERA interests]. However an agreement was reached and the publisher sponsored an ECER Keynote. The Journal had good papers but mainly from the US [and not Europe]. However, subscriptions to the Educational Research and Evaluation from EERA members were slow in increasing, only 36 subscriptions two years later [Frankfurt September 1997]

In 1997, Letter to President [Calderhead] from the publishers said that it wished to end their sponsoring of the Swets & Zeitlinger Lecture with immediate effect. They also wished to end the agreement regarding the Journal. The main reason for this was that EERA membership had not subscribed to the Journal. Following this letter, the President told the Council that

I think EERA should have its own journal, and I don’t think we would have any difficulty persuading a publisher to take this on. The problem will be that as long as EERA is an association of associations with a small number of individual members, we are likely to face the same circulation problem - we are unable to contact the membership directly and therefore to solicit subscriptions. [Ljubljana December 1997]

In 2000, during the period of financial instability, the problem of the Handbook and the European Educational Researcher costs, combined with their other problems of production and distribution, had to be solved urgently. It was proposed that they would be replaced by a new Journal,

A European educational research journal of the highest international standard and the pre-eminent source of publication for educational research in Europe, focusing on the scholarly and practical creation of the European Space for Educational Research.

The Journal was also intended to save EERA about 18,750 Euros a year, a major saving. The new Journal would be online only and the editorial costs of the EERJ [translation, deputy editors, office costs, reviewing, editorial board meetings, research travel, seminars etc] would be met by the publisher from sales to universities [campus licenses]. The Journal would be free to EERA members attending the annual ECER Glasgow June 2001
The EERJ was to be built upon the work of EERA networks and linked projects; on the Keynote addresses to ECER; on Research Policy Roundtables at ECER; on Essay Reviews and Reports. **Glasgow May 2003** Within a year of its foundation, the new EERA Journal had subscribers in 59 countries and it was noted that the EERJ now has a presence in Greece, Italy, Turkey and Hungary, countries where previously EERA had problems making links. It was agreed that this was a success especially given past distribution problems with the newsletter.....It was agreed that the journal was a successful and growing initiative which is helping to increase EERA’s credibility and visibility worldwide. **Hamburg Sept 2003** Although the EERJ had become established as a valuable journal, and the rise on its downloads suggested this, the Editorial Board [drawn from the Networks and countries across Europe] had set itself a great task

Although the Journal has worked well, mainly through EERA Network based issues, major European Research reports [including the recent EU Education Indicator reports], and the growing number of high quality unsolicited papers, it is felt that it has still to meet its obligation to fully reflect upon and analyze the growing Europeanization of educational research issues. **Editor Report Dublin Sept 2005**

A new additional Board of young researchers from 5 European countries was created as a Review Board and an agreement with the PG Network Conveners on publishing between 6-8 pre conference papers in an EERJ issue each year was reached **Berlin June 2008**
6. Finance

The Association that began as an idealistic and innovative idea for Europe soon began to be caught up in financial problems. Successful conferences did not mean a healthy bank balance, and vice versa, sometimes weak conferences produced useful surpluses. By the time of Bath95, EERA had reserves of £7411.36. Although there were 1200 people at the ECER, because of high BERA costs, EERA made only £2/3 thousand pounds surplus over costs. This was its first ECER. The financial statement for 1997 shows that after Seville96 that, suddenly, EERA was having to manage large sums of money – the income from the ECER was nearly £100,000 but the range of outgoing costs was extensive – a surplus of £27,000 was produced after all costs were excluded. In the following year though, at ECER97 Frankfurt, a loss would have been made without sponsorship from the University. Only the surplus from ECER 95 Seville eased the situation.

The end of year accounts 1997 show a slight loss of income, a rise in costs and an overall 40% loss in the ECER surplus. So, it was thought that if the target of the next conference, Ljubljana98, was met EERA would be safe but ECER98 produced a loss of £6482 Treasurers Report 99.

The rising costs of the EERA Office in Edinburgh and the declining surpluses from the ECER meant that the Council was facing real difficulty by 1999. By May Edinburgh 1999, the Treasurer’s major Report showed that income was declining and costs were rising. A new general guideline on ECER financing suggested that any surplus from the conference is to be divided 50/50 between EERA and local organizers and if there is a loss EERA will bear the loss alone. May 1999 Edinburgh. The Council felt that the yearly budget was a major problem because Office costs were unknown and in order to be able to control the budget, yearly costs needed to be established and known in advance.

“EERA should be managing a budget and not be managed by a budget December 1999

In 1999, the surplus for ECER99 Lahti was €813.15 December 1999

The Council felt that each ECER needed to provide a surplus to pay for the Office. The focus of activity was the ECER and other objectives were postponed.

Moving the Office to Glasgow was part of the emergency action needed to control and improve EERA finances. The Treasurer produced a report in January 2003 showing £97,000 (€135,000) in the EERA bank account which would have been higher if all membership fees had been paid by the associations. This improved financial situation was mainly due to the previous ECERs in Edinburgh and Lisbon. However when giving the budget for the year, it was dependent on projected figures for the ECER in Hamburg eg the cost of ECER 2003 was approximately £70,000 (€100,000). Depending on how many delegates were members and how many paid the early bird fee, the estimated income was £110,000 (€150,000). A healthy surplus was therefore predicted. However the SG reminded the Council that the Office running costs (around £65,000 or
€90, 000) and other EERA expenses must be met from any surplus. **Hamburg Sept 2003**

The Council received a Report in May 2003, assisted by the SERA Treasurer, which suggested a most serious situation in its finances –

**EERA Financial Monitoring - A short report with recommendations**

1. Lack of relationship in the conference database to conference income and refund
2. Difficulty with credit card payment documentation
3. Inconsistency of cheque payments vouching and issue from 2 sources
4. Confusion of financial function with relationship to Council, Conference and Secretariat business
5. Confusion over Jordanhill [EERA Office site] internal accounts caused by changes in staff and poor account monitoring and vouching
6. Time delays in bank statement receipt and reconciliation
7. No account reconciliation system in place

I am of the opinion that the Council do not have the level of control over EERA financial planning which their authority demands **Glasgow May 2003**

The Treasurer expected that 2004 would be stable financially and its bank balance would remain the same. Yet within a few months, a different situation emerged

The costs for the conference were estimated at about £60000. This estimate is not quite correct. The expected costs for Crete 2004 will be about £90000. ...and this exceeds the expected costs and compared to Hamburg 2004 and Lisbon 2003, this means a substantial increase. To stay alive and to be able to remain paying the secretariat and other EERA functions, EERA cannot afford such an increase every year. The Crete bid has to be discussed in order to reduce certain expected costs. **Glasgow June 2004**

Constant instability in finance continued even though the costs of the Office had been reduced and managed; the constant fluctuations in the ECER and its costing had become the major problem. The Treasurer reported in September 2004 that by the end of the year there would only be enough money to cover EERA’s expenses for the first half of 2005. Income from the next conference would not be received until July/August. It was agreed that the registration fees should not be increased by more than €20. At the January meeting ways to reduce costs and increase income had to be discussed **Crete Sept 2004**

A radical plan for the EERA finances was formulated.

introduction of a financial model, the so-called Glasgow model, which defines the amount of money EERA makes available for an ECER. Because this is related to the number of paying participants, it limits EERA's financial risks. Besides, it enables the Treasurer to manage ECER costs from the very beginning.
Also, the Crete ECER 04 had a large number of delegates (about 1150) which helped to stabilize the situation. The Treasurer also undertook some savings in banking and council costs and increased membership costs. A new plan to reduce Office costs was discussed.

**Amsterdam June 2005**

By the end of 2005, there was a positive result of Euro 150, 926 [a consequence of the number of delegates at Dublin and the new financial model which relates the money made available for ECER to the number of paying delegates. The estimated balance at the end of 2006 is Euro 170, 926** Ghent Jan 2007 Treasurer

Between the crisis in EERA in 2003 and contemporary EERA in 2008, the EERA bank balance shifted from 54000 Euros to 230,000 Euros approximately, mainly due to the work on ECER costs. Suddenly, the problem was not overspend but underspend. To avoid problems with charity law, EERA needed to invest or spend wisely its new resources. **Berlin June 2008.** In the following year, 2008, the estimated balance rose to Euro 375,000 and it was even more crucial to develop plans for new projects **Goteborg Jan 2009** The same meeting proposed that there should be an annual network seminar for a convenor from each network before the June Council meeting **Goteborg Jan 2009**
7. ECER

The major annual business of the Council and the Office was and is the ECER. After the exceptional case of the ECER92 in Twente, decisions had to be made about the nature and organization of the ECER. It was even unclear how often it should be held. Learning what an ECER was or could be turned out to be an experimental process, and each early ECER was different.

It was agreed that Seville96 should be an English language conference and that the EERA Office would deal with the registrations, the Seville Host Committee dealt with local arrangements [meeting rooms, accommodation and the social programme] and a Programme Committee, based in the Netherlands, dealt with the academic arrangements. [Bath, 16th & 17th September 1995]. The closing date for submissions was as late as May 20th. It was noted that all deadlines were considerably later than those used for ECER95. For example, deadline for paper submission had been January 1995 and for ECER97 it was 20 April and then extended to 20 May

Planning and administering a conference for 1,000 people was an extremely demanding task, and a large number of people contributed to it. ECER96 Seville was the first occasion which EERA carried this out on its own, and it was also arranged at comparatively short notice. We are aware of some difficulties we encountered and the need to correct these in future occasions President October 96 [Calderhead]

It was decided, after Seville97, that EERA would not organize any further excursion programmes, on the other hand, the ECER in Bath95 began with a two day research students conference and the commitment to emerging researchers has been a consistent ECER feature since.

It was felt important to invite Press delegates. In practice this meant that the Times Educational Supplement {UK} who collected papers and met speakers, aided by the Office.

In 1997, preparing for ECER97 Frankfurt, the Office checklist looked like this-

A checklist of ECER organization issues was produced –

Evaluation forms placed in conference packs: One hundred and fourteen forms were returned

Ensure venues are suitable before they are decided on: number of rooms available for sessions at venue, costs involved, lunch/coffee availability/cost, number of hotel rooms/cost, ease of travel access etc.

Make sure information in leaflet is accurate; earlier distribution of leaflets; only produce leaflets at the Secretariat.

More precise advance requests from Council of how many leaflets they could distribute.

Earlier deadline for receipt of papers and do not extend.

Early meeting of coordinator/ academic secretary with local hosts.
Ensure clear avenues and modes of communication between programme coordinator/hosts.

Earlier start on work for following year’s conference - this should overlap the running of the current year’s conference, ie information for leaflet should be provided to Secretariat in September of previous year.

Consideration might be given as to whether ECER should be run biennially. The drop in income could be offset by needing less staff hours in the non-conference year but there could be more time given to development of EERA and improving advance conference organization and planning.

Use programme committee and network to review papers.

Have more symposia, most grouped round networks.

Bear in mind the considerable clerical work involved with preparing the programme - receiving and logging papers, acknowledging, photocopying if necessary and distributing to reviewers, sorting into types/topics, sending acceptance letters, checking abstracts sent on disk, scanning abstracts if necessary. Ensure enough help available.

Avoid using an agency as, on balance, it probably caused more problems than it helped.

Double check all arrangements well before the conference date and avoid last-minute changes (eg lunch venue and some session rooms changed week before).

A strong review policy for papers was organized for Frankfurt97 but Council sowed the seeds of future confusion at this time. There was agreement that new researchers needed to be encouraged, particularly in countries where educational research was a new subject. If the general standard was high, there should be room to carry some weaker papers and some papers could be changed to posters and not rejected completely. This had been done by some reviewers. When network conveners were involved in the Programme Committee they would get to know the standards and the task should become easier in future. Some proposals had not come in the form requested and it was felt that if clear instructions were not carried out, rejection was justified. It was pointed out that this was a transitional year, with networks taking a large role, and lessons would be learnt for the future. [Edinburgh May 1997]. It was confirmed that ECER evaluations would take place each year [Edinburgh May 1997]

The ECER language was discussed [again]: It was suggested that conference leaflets and abstracts should be produced in two languages, English and the host country language. There was agreement that the Invitation to Participate leaflet should from now on be in English and the language of the host country and other fliers should have translations. It might be that small linguistic groups should be encouraged at the conference which might lead to wider interest. As far as Frankfurt ECER97 was concerned, presenters would be encouraged to provide a translation of their paper/s into English or German. [Edinburgh May 1997] There was still unease about the quality of papers and homogeneity of countries in sessions; paper sessions could be unattached [from networks] and about non-attendance and programme
disruption [Frankfurt September 1997]

The evaluation of the ECER97 Frankfurt stressed the need for greater quality control [a standard format for submission and clearer criteria for reviewing]; insistence that every proposal must have a research base; improvement in the quality of chairing and management of symposia and a reduction in English language dominance; penalization of absentees; strengthening of network structure and link more sessions to networks; thematic influence for conference and ensuring more social areas for informal discussion [Ljubljana December 1997]. Many of these issues, from this evaluation, began to shape the future ECERs. It was also beginning to be the rule that nationally focused papers should be directed back to their national association conferences and that Symposia should have representation from three countries; this was partly to overcome the determination by some university departments or countries to dominate symposia.

The loss of the Swets and Zeitlinger keynote, and the continuation of the problematic Presidential Lecture meant that a discussion on future keynotes, including an EERA lecture, took place. [Ljubljana December 1997]

The language policy continued to cause problems for the Council. The ECER98 organizing committee wished to use French instead of Slovene. They were reminded that a language policy already existed i.e. English and the language of the organizing country, and that a new language policy was not on the agenda. It was therefore decided that if a host country wishes to have any change in the language used at the conference, this should be indicated with, at least, a year's notice at the Council [Ljubljana December 1997]

For the ECER Ljubljana in 1998, 548 papers were submitted and the major attendee groups came from

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>227</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

600 proposals were finally received, out of which 450 were in the programme. The flat rate of rejection was 8%. However, since more papers than ever before were moved from paper sessions to poster session the actual rejection rate was of 12%. As EERA is aiming at a higher rejection rate than 12% refereeing policies are reviewed continually. [AGA Ljubljana ECER 1998]

By May Edinburgh 1999, the British Education Index database was becoming integrated with the EERA web
page and had established a searchable webpage for the ECER, based on the European Thesaurus index of abstracts. Its Report suggested that it is clear that many readers are looking beyond their national boundaries for research reports. Calls [downloads] from Spain, France, the Netherlands, Portugal and Norway were also spread across documents from several nations.

Keynote policy was still to emerge. Local organizers were reminded that only the EERA Speaker would be subsidized by EERA, local organizers had to find sponsorship for their own key speakers. Forward planning for the Edinburgh ECER2000 included two Keynote lectures for the first time plus a SERA sponsored session on 'Scotland in Europe'

In 1999, the topic of the changing conditions of research in Europe was considered when choosing the speakers; it was felt appropriate to have someone who would reflect upon these changes and act upon them. In this regard, Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens were mentioned as well as Edith Cresson of the EEC. Sept99 Ljubljana

The Bulletin stated that ‘it will be the intention of the Conveners to place papers within intra-European panels and the paper proposers should write for a European audience [and not a national one]. Papers with a very narrow national scope generally will be rejected (as they are better suited to national research fora)

SecGen to Bulletin Editor June 1998

The Edinburgh ECER 2000 was advertised heavily [[1600 copies of the Being and Becoming a Researcher Flier, the Research Students strand, were posted out] Edinburgh, whilst a popular venue for the ECER 2000 was also expensive, although it was hoped that through the size of the conference enough money would be generated to allow for necessary development within EERA.

At Lille ECER2001, there were 22 networks of different size operating. In these networks 542 papers in sum are presented here in Lille [President June 2001]

If ECER is part of a financial strategy for EERA, then perhaps Conference should move toward (like AERA) a considered policy as to preferred European cities capable of managing a large conference and of attracting members in greater numbers. The choice of city will affect revenue [which affects the scope of EERA activities]. In addition, Conference should consider being supported by a professional agency to reduce variation between conference experiences and to continue good practice between conferences. EERA Review 1998 – 2001[President and SG]
Apart from the constant uncertainty about the next ECER venue and the reliability and experience of its partners, the biggest problems the Office faced [in the early years of the century] early in the Conference year were with the form of the submissions and the communications with conveners. Submissions were sent without a full précis or network allocation, as requested. Sometimes their translation does not make enough sense for them to be passed onto conveners. In other cases, papers were submitted which did not fit the networks at all; this is because EERA did not have an Early Years or a Teaching and Learning Network, for example. The Office had a very difficult task trying to make judgments about the submissions. The clearer and more accurate they were, the less administrative trouble they caused.

The second problem was the often physical transmission of the papers between the Office and the network conveners. The Office managed this process but at the cost of managing efficiently its other tasks; for example, it took time to answer urgent requests. Conveners resisted papers sent to them after the deadline when other conveners had not passed them on earlier. Judgments were made in the Office about the academic nature of a proposal when no network has been proposed for it.

In 2001, the President and SG were concerned about the disappearance of information on rejection rates which enabled comparison to be made between networks. Data in the late 90s showed large discrepancies between networks, which appeared never to reject, and those that did. Although a successful ECER had been one that works for everybody and keeps EERA afloat financially, a new criterion was suggested: this proposed that a successful ECER should work ‘scientifically’ and makes a contribution to educational research. In which case, rejection rates and the reasons for rejection becomes a subject of study. A parallel study on the internal organization of EERA Council in 2001 proposed that a nominated member of Council should act as liaison with the Conveners Group.

Managing the ECER, the daily work of the ECER, was another crucial issue, following particular difficulties at Lille2001 when communications on the site were almost non-existent. For the ECER 2002 Lisbon EERA engaged assistants who attended at the beginning of each session to make sure the room is open, a chairperson and the presenters were present and that there were no problems. *SG Letter to Convenors  October 2001*

However, the Council’s wish to overcome ECER difficulties following Lille 2001 meant that it was concerned about every feature of ECER organization. The tensions this caused care expressed below
this "centralized" system is not accurate for the involvement of national societies. My Portuguese colleagues feel that the "only thing that EERA wants is a location to the Conference and a place for people to sleep" (!). This feeling increased with last message from [the President] saying that EERA will take care of the flier and the book of the Conference Programme. Several colleagues suggested that it would be probably better to EERA to contact a travel agency in Portugal, some of them are very good in organizing these kind of Conferences: it would be a better deal for EERA and more efficient than working with the University of Lisbon and the Portuguese Society for Educational Sciences...

I think that it is important for you to know the "feelings" of the colleagues responsible for the Portuguese Society. I must say that I share most of these feelings. This disagreement doesn't mean that we don't respect your opinions and your ways of doing. It just means that you have a different opinion on how to act on the European field of research and how to involve national societies on the organization of European Conferences. [ECER 2002 Lisbon] Letter to President and SG July 2001

Eventually relations improved and Lisbon2002 became a successful ECER of a new type: there was a closing ceremony for the first time; the postgraduate conference was integrated into the main ECER programme; session chairs evaluated their sessions; and evening socials replaced the Conference Dinner, always a source of critical evaluations.

The following year there was another urgency about the ECER Venue and the SG undertook extensive research and negotiation with commercial conference agencies, especially in Prague and Budapest, to provide managed venues in places EERA wanted to go to. However, most of these proved too costly with certain tie-ins, such as expensive accommodation and catering. Although members of the Council tried to use their contacts in Prague, for example, the useful link between the University and the commercial companies could not be made. Glasgow June 2002

At fairly short notice, the ECER managed to go to Hamburg in 2003 and a comparison can be made between the ECER2003 in Hamburg and the ECER2004 Crete [again a result of personal Council contacts]

- Total number of people named on proposal submissions (either sole authors or co-authors was 1833 [figure for Hamburg: 1239]
- Of this number, 462 indicated at the submission stage that they would not attend
- Therefore the maximum number who could attend was 1371 [figure for Hamburg: 974]
- The final number of delegates who actually registered was 1282 [figure for Hamburg: 830]
- 200 of these people came to "listen only" i.e. not to present any papers [figure for Hamburg: 79]
• total submissions 1031 – 922 papers, 19 workshops, 21 roundtables, 41 posters, 28 symposia
[figure for Hamburg: total of 688 -- 612 papers. 14 workshops, 12 roundtables, 20 posters, 30 symposia]

• Of the 1031 submissions, 52 were rejected and 121 subsequently cancelled before the conference [figure for Hamburg: 47 of the 688 submissions were rejected and 78 subsequently cancelled]

Unsurprisingly, Crete2004 attracted a large number of local, regional delegates from Greece and Cyprus [300], and a regular core from the UK [490] and the Nordic countries [166 from Finland, and 158 from Sweden] Dublin Jan 2005

A fewer number of proposals were sent into the Office for the Dublin2005 ECER [888]: this included 798 papers, 34 posters, 8 workshops, 22 roundtables, 26 symposia and 35 were rejected and 22 were cancelled. Amsterdam June 2005

For the 2005 ECER, a presentation policy was created after several years of often-disregarded advice for presenters. Each year the evaluations of ECERs identified difficulties experienced by participants in understanding the language and communication of speakers as the single most important category of difficulty encountered. Although this particular policy didn’t continue, the problem did. It was an attempt to make the session Chair act as mediator between the presenter and the audience: it was suggested that if an audience member had difficulty in understanding the presentation, they should wave a green slip of paper. The chairperson had to decide: a) if there is a difficulty, b) what that difficulty is and c) what an appropriate response, if any, would be, and at the same time, try to support an uninterrupted presentation. Some examples of communications difficulties could include:

• Speaking too quickly - you could politely ask the speaker to slow down a little.
• Using jargon, idioms or acronyms - you could ask the speaker to explain key words or phrases which are essential to the understanding of the presentation Convenor Dublin Sept 2005

The ECER timetable was readjusted again; the use of Saturday mornings was discontinued, they produced poorly attended sessions. It was suggested that they should be used for Business meetings and that the ECER should start earlier on the Wednesday morning. Dublin Sept 2005 Again the problem of the quality of the research presentations was raised: it was noted that there had been a marked variation in the quality of papers between networks and some delegates did not present real research. The need to move to a higher level of quality was agreed. Overall, only 35 out of 890 proposals were rejected. In the Open Network [the Network set up to manage papers outside the current Network structure] alone the rejection rate was almost 50%. It was suggested that some networks accept proposals in order to keep
the network going and to use ECER as a meeting place. **Dublin Sept 2005**

The success of the ECER is not judged simply as a question of finance or of organization, it has to meet the aims of the EERA. The lack of support at this time from associations in the South, and the lack of representations from some countries, meant that the ECER moved to work with assured partners with strong university and associational links. This issue was raised in 2006. As ECER 2007 (Ghent) and 2008 (Gothenburg) would take place in Northern Europe, it was suggested that there might be fewer delegates from the South (Italy, Spain). It was felt that EERA should be more active in attracting Southern European delegates and, if these delegates will not come to ECER, then ECER needs to be held in the South. Council felt that this is a general problem which can only be solved through discussion with Southern European colleagues about starting a national association. It was noted that both Spanish associations (AIDIPE and SEP) had paid their annual membership subscription to EERA but they do not participate in Council or have any other communication with EERA. The need to revive Spanish and Portuguese association membership and EERA involvement was agreed **Geneva Jan 2006**

The integration of the new EERA website with the new conference software was discussed in Council. It was noted that the existing conference database had to be maintained until a new system which works perfectly is available. A detailed description of office procedures is required as a basis for sourcing new software. New software linked to the website would allow Conveners to access and evaluate proposals more quickly. The Convener Representative intended to work with the Office to document each step of conference organization and office workflow. Some Council members proposed that instead of trying to create new software, EERA should look at existing conference software used by other European organizations and see if it could be adjusted to handle EERA’s needs **Geneva Jan 2006**

The problem of scientific quality continued to haunt the Council. It was proposed that new networks should run for 3 years and then be re-evaluated by Council based on their reporting and number of proposals. If the review is negative then the network would consequently be abandoned by strictly applying the rules for networks. This suggestion was approved **Geneva Jan 2006** Due to high number of no-shows, the office will use data from the Chairperson session evaluation forms and keep a blacklist for each network **Geneva September 2006**. Increasingly the scientific quality began to be associated with the sociality of the ECER, that is, the way in which it enabled people to work together, a new criterion for its success. Ghent2006 and Gothenberg2008 organizers were asked to bear in mind the importance of the social space at the ECER. Publishers should be located at the most central area possible to ensure that the exhibit is a core event. There should be an open common space for people to socialize **Geneva September 2006**

The ECER in Geneva produced a useful set of data for comparing the last four ECERS **Copenhagen June 2006**
Symposia were growing in number, and they had to include presentations from three countries, suggesting that the aim of EERA to create a European Space for educational research was beginning to be realized.
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<td>2003 Hamburg</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>686</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECER</th>
<th>% Rejected proposals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006 Geneva</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 Dublin</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 Crete</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 Hamburg</td>
<td>6.85 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tightening of Europe wide legislation on migration nearly affected the Ghent ECER 2007 as, in Belgium, a conference lasts more than 5 days, delegates have to undergo a complete immigration process. As in some cases attendees did come for 5 days, it was decided to advertise the ECER as 3 days with Saturday for informal networking Berlin June 2007

Although two networks had been closed down over the life of EERA, several problematic networks still continued despite the resolutions of the Council. They revealed varied procedures and results on acceptance and rejection. However, Networks 14 [Communities and Schools] and 19 [Ethnography] were mentioned as having a low number of proposals, no reports, and low web presentation of quality: previously, Network % [Youth at Risk] and Network 20 [Innovative Intercultural Learning] had been mentioned, so it is possible that they had improved their performance. A few years after a shift to the idea of Roundtables, which didn’t specify three-country representation [like the Symposia], was reviewed as it was creating a strand of monocultural work at ECER that was against its spirit and practice. The Call for papers had to be redrafted and Conveners consulted about the change back Berlin June 2007

The issue of working with commercial companies began to emerge again as the ECER was beginning to test the limits of European university sites. The Vienna organizers had suggested a preference for working with a commercial conference company Berlin June 2007

The ECER 2008 Goteborg had 1220 presentations including 165 in the Preconference. A major review was undertaken, through Council, of network submissions, redirections and rejections accepted, and
procedures for establishing a new network Berlin June 2008 [Later in the year, a new Network, Maths Education, was accepted under these rules]. New Network templates and Reports were created and a new organizational innovation, a meeting of the SG, the Network Representative on Council, Network Convener Representatives and the EERA Office would become a standard annual event, and its success in improving the organizational infrastructure and relations of the ECER recognized Goteborg Jan 2009 These Convener gave a very positive evaluation of the new conference management system, Conftool, as saving their time and with an easy operation. Berlin June 2008
8. EERA Office

In the first working year of EERA [1994], the Office was established in Edinburgh at the Scottish Council for Research in Education, following an offer of support from its Director, Harry Black [who had died while at Strasbourg]. Initially, the Office was provided without cost. By 1996, things had changed. EERA paid SCRE annually £25,000 for an administrator, which meant that for ECER 96 Seville, half the budget (£50,000) had to pay for the administrator. In October 96, the first President [Calderhead] sent SCRE a note, the basis of an agreement that lasted for several years, in which the actual costs of the Office plus an overhead [additional] charge was agreed:

The total costs of employing [an EERA secretary], a 40%" overhead and all direct costs associated with EERA administration will be met by EERA.

As well as an Administrator, an additional post was required

I would also like to confirm that the EERA Executive Committee decided to make a half-time appointment of an Academic Secretary to assist in the preparation of the Conference Programme and in other academic matters related to the administration of EERA. Again EERA will reimburse SCRE for all the salary costs, a 40% overhead and all related direct costs.

[Letter October 1996]

SCRE also provided the first Treasurer for EERA. In 1997, the Office spent a lot of time contacting institutions and individuals about their subscriptions

The Frankfurt ECER 97 was the first ECER that EERA organized by itself, relying on its own Office and systems. The scale of operation and its manual operation was arduous and demanded a lot of work from the Office. All of it was new and needed the creation of new Office systems and an understanding within EERA of how things would work.

_During 1997, for the ECER organization, the Office communicated by email, fax, post and telephone. Booking forms, official dinner letters, travel agent correspondence [and payments] were made manually. A database was used for the first time at SCRE - The basis of the registration record was formed from the information coming in on the registration forms and, for speed, the order of data entry was arranged to match that. The database was then expanded and altered as new needs arose. Acknowledgement letters, receipts, invoices, badges, address labels, lunch lists, participants' list all came off this database. Temporary help was used to mail the draft programme and to help with registration, envelope filling and answering telephone during part of July and August. The Call for Papers and Registration_
Leaflets had been circulated in multiple copies to ECER97 delegates, Schools of Education, UK, Schools of Education, Europe, all members and the Executive. A major Publishers Exhibition was organized; this meant writing to tens of publishers and 17 finally exhibited. Sending out and corresponding about ECER invoices took a long time later in the year: some institutions would only send payment if an invoice was sent first.; delegates were registering right up to the day before the conference, so if payment was not included for those, an invoice was issued; pile of unprocessed forms waiting for payments and these were chased after the ECER; and some universities took many weeks to send payment. Cash payments were accepted at the ECER. Financial workload was considerable: checking bank authorizations, bank transfers, banking cash and cheques, late receipts, and currency transfers. Attendance certificates had to be produced for each delegate, and had to be hand signed. Office Report 1997

The AGA at Frankfurt ECER97 commented upon the high staff costs of the EERA. The Treasurer responded that the cost was reasonable for the work done – the main tasks being co-ordination and programme production for the conference – and the staff worked many unpaid hours. [Frankfurt AGA 1997] Council discussions at this time were concerned with EERA finances: apparent healthy balances disguised the fact that outgoing bills and new ECER payments made the situation unclear. The financing of the Office was unclear to Council members and to each new innovation in its work was added a 40% surcharge following the earlier agreement. SCRE also asked that Office members worked 25% for them [on switchboards, office work etc]. Eventually, the declining ECER income and the rising Office costs made the new President and Secretary General search for serious cuts in the budget.

At the same time, EERA felt that an Academic Secretary, managing the quality and organization of the ECER, should be appointed; the post was needed to create the Call for Papers, conference paper selection criteria, and receiving papers, symposia and roundtable proposals for the ECER [with help from the Executive Committee members] May 1999 Edinburgh Apart from the cost of this post, when cuts had to be made, the contract with SCRE meant that this post, like the others, would be in SCRE’s employment, and not directly manageable by EERA. September 1999 Lahti

A new contract with the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, to manage the Office was agreed: this time, the contract was a straight cost relation compared to the SCRE costs plus overhead charge. It was estimated that estimated contract savings against the SRE contract would be over one third 2000 [48,797 plus cost of audit / software support ] saving over 15,000 Euros annually GS Jan 2000
The Council noted that there was a serious lack of archive material in the office re minutes of previous meetings etc. This was partly due to the move from SCRE in Edinburgh through to Strathclyde. Both the President and the Secretary General offered to fill the "gaps" in paperwork from their own records. In the long-term it was hoped that the new database would also help with archiving.

Glasgow Nov 2001

The first clear EERA budget in 2000 was in the right direction but still difficult to manage clearly

I have not produced a budget for EERA for this meeting. I have found it difficult to determine costs, given the recent and unanticipated move to the University of Strathclyde from SCRE. We are paying our account at Strathclyde in quarterly payments, in arrears, and so the first one is not due until the end of April. As a result, I do not have a clear indication of the costs incurred to date, although I anticipate that they will not be excessive. There were, naturally, some start-up costs in moving such as equipment and new site licences for the software on the computer. The University has provided the EERA Office with desks, chairs, bookshelves and a second computer (on loan, free of charge) - and two rooms for all of this – if the office were to move again, all of this would have to be found in the new location.

Treasurer report May 2000

Using the savings a full time member of staff, an Academic Secretary, was appointed: this role was to play a key role in managing the administration of EERA, liaising with its Council and Network Conveners, working with the EERA Secretary General and President, organizing its Conferences and overseeing its communications. Experience in educational research was regarded as helpful. The post involves liaison with educational researchers throughout Europe and good skills in two European languages [including English] is necessary. Treasurer Glasgow Nov 2000. However, the newly appointed Academic Secretary only stayed a year or so and unfortunately her time coincided with the unhappy Lille ECER 2001, and the less than smoothly organized shift from Edinburgh. For the next few years, the EERA Office, a series of part time staff and a single, experienced staff member at Strathclyde, organized the ECER very well, corresponded with Conveners and managed the actual ECER support on site. As EERA moved out of its organizational and financial crises, then more was demanded of the Office across a range of new developments and a growing ECER. After a series of visits to see if the Conveners Representative and the SGs could help them, it was decided to put the
EERA Office contract out to tender. SERA supported the Strathclyde Office bid and the DGfE wrote the document for a Berlin Office.

the DGfE decided recently not to let its office move with the president any more, but to install a standing office which is located in Berlin. Decisive for this decision were reflections about continuity and a professional management of the office. We have therefore signed a contract with the Freie Universitat Berlin which had offered the DGfE the rental of rooms at very favorable conditions. A negotiation with the Chancellor and the President of the FU had the result that the University is willing to make the same offer to EERA Letter to President EERA 2006

The Berlin Office did ‘guarantee a smooth transition’ from Glasgow and with GERA, a new website address was registered and conference management systems were tested. EERA wanted a system which could be easily adopted for ECER purposes and which offered annual contracts Berlin June 2007
9. European Educational Research

From the beginning of EERA, it was intended that it would act within the field of educational research and one of the Council’s first acts was to encourage Armin Gretler, a Council member and one of EERA’s strongest supporters, to create an ambitious survey of national associations across Europe about the condition of educational research in their countries Edinburgh May 1998. He had had no reply from some small countries so far (Bosnia, Belarus, Croatia, Moldavia, Ukraine) and invited members of the committee to contact him if they had links in these countries. Armin Gretler would contact the EERA Secretariat at the beginning of 1999 to help in the publication of this work in which Network 12 was involved Ljubljana Sept 1998 [Confirmed at December 1998 Lahti]

EERA Inquiry on Structure and Organization of Ed, R & D in European countries questionnaire was tabled in 1999. Armin hoped to be able to publish the brochure the following year. It was agreed that Armin would get financial support of £500 from EERA to help him publish the research. It was also suggested that this work could be used as a base for a symposium at the Lahti ECER. So, this task was taken further at ECER Lahti 1999 when a Presidential symposium, Changing Conditions and Governance of Education Research in Europe, was organized in Lahti. The aim of the symposium was to discuss the state of European Research (i.e. what has changed, what the situation looks like, how to organize and improve policies of educational research). It was thought that it would be a good idea to arrange a meeting with the Presidents of the European Associations, possibly in Brussels and invite people from Brussels to the meeting. Funding for this project was problematic though [President and SG]. The Lahti Symposium was introduced as -

- a more International and differentiated view of how educational research is organized and funded in different national contexts, what research perspective that dominate and what changes or reforms in education systems imply for education research. Hopefully this will lead to increased possibilities for international research and cooperation and integration in Europe. This is the first in a series of symposia and the task for the participants is to inform each other about each other’s research contexts and to create an agenda for future seminars. In this first symposium we will deal with the following questions: What are the conditions for educational research in different national contexts? What recent changes in these conditions have occurred and what arguments have been used to justify these changes? How is educational research governed in different national contexts? Have there been any recent changes in governance or debates about changes and what arguments have been put forward for change? Have there
been any major reforms or reconstructions of education and if so, what role has educational research played in them? Do these changes have implications for educational research? What are our missions in international cooperation and what is needed to improve this cooperation? Can cooperation lead to improvements in educational research? If so, in what ways? The important task in this symposium is to find ways to communicate, to share experience and to discuss important new missions. Participants are asked to present their cases and perspectives.

Lahti September 99

A paper "Sciences of Education Between Disciplinary and Professional Field - An analysis of the tensions and pitfalls of the process of disciplinarization" [Hofstetter and Schneuwly] was produced following the first President's seminar at ECER 1999 and circulated to the Council. The President invited the members of Council [and through them their national associations] to comment on this paper and requested that each organization should produce a one or two page response to the analytic concepts used in the paper to be produced for the ECER 2000 President's seminar Presidents Report Glasgow May 2000 It was intended that the ECER would act as a place in which organized discussion and analysis of European research issues would continue and a discussion of European organizational and policy issues fostered. 'Council, through its officers, should organize events within ECER itself to make sure that European policy on research is understood and analyzed' EERA Review 1998 – 2001[President and SG]

The PERINE [Pedagogical and Educational Research Information Network for Europe] project tried to assist this process, mainly through Network 12 [Library and Information Science]: the project was intended to create a multilingual database of Internet resource descriptions; to aid the promotion and dissemination of information about educational research activity; and a collection of information about internet resources through designated national agencies Glasgow May 2000 Perine gained funding from the EU Information Society Programme Glasgow June 2001

From this point, EERA had a number of initiatives in research policy and practice. The PG Network strategic plan intended support bids to national organizations for doctoral training programmes. If funding from the EU became available the Convener explained that a summer school could be started Lisbon Review 2002 The Treasurer agreed to produce a general 5 page document outlining EERA's goals of developing research training in Europe which he would circulate to the Council for comment before submission to the EU Glasgow June 2002
A research infrastructure bid was produced for early 2004 to assist EERA to become a strong foundation for research within Europe. It intended, among other things, to propose the creation of a searchable database of past conference papers to pool the resources within EERA's research networks and spread this information and knowledge across Europe. It was agreed that although this would be an ambitious project, the idea of pooling resources and benefiting from each other’s research was a good idea. Hamburg Sept 2003

Following the success of the EERJ Roundtable on Citation and Publication in Europe, the publishers agreed to finance and support a workshop, in January or February 2005, for representatives from national organizations, networks, libraries and PERINE to discuss the European Social Science Citation Index Crete September 2004. The publishers' association were interested in partnering EERA and other relevant organizations to work on a European index and a meeting in Oxford was arranged to discuss its organizing principles, how it would define quality and how it will be used. The President indicated that the intention was not to produce a citation index, which would be the European equivalent of ISI, rather it would be a structured repository of research publications which would be a powerful tool for the research community Dublin Jan 2005

European Educational Research Database Proposal [later to be known as EERQI]: A report on progress said that the proposal had been discussed with the PERINE project, the publishers were interested, and it was clear that the strength of the proposal would depend on the expertise of the researchers involved. A letter from Council was circulated to the national associations seeking financial support Amsterdam June 2005. Two meetings with publishers took place to discuss the possibility of developing a European educational research database AGA Dublin Sept 2005. A proposal was submitted to the EU 7th Framework in March 2007 ‘to build a repository for European ed research documents, inc possible citation linking, open access papers and the development of a multi lingual thesaurus Ghent September 2006. EERQI began in March and the first prototype is to be produced in 2008 and tested in 2009 Berlin June 2008

The idea of a research Summer School had been discussed since the early days. The President indicated that the programme for the Summer School in Germany, in partnership with the DGfE, had been
finalized. The focus would be on research methodology and there were 4 keynote speakers (2 from the UK and 2 from Germany). The Summer School was mainly but not entirely in German. **Amsterdam June 2005**

An effort was needed to attract more international students and a Council working group proposed the idea of a new EERA Summer School, moving around Europe. **Berlin June 2007**

A proposal was made to further the European Research Space with a Summer School based on EERA and university partnerships: this would take place once a year for 5 days, mainly in English language and was supported with EERA with Euro 20,000 pa. **Berlin June 2008**

The following year, specialist Summer Schools, organized and related to Networks SS would be supported: Network 17 History proposed to have a Summer School in 2010. An additional financing scheme for special projects and meetings for Networks was begun also **Goteborg Jan 2009**

Martin Lawn

Edinburgh

June 2010
Annex Content List [Website additions]

- THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION 1994
- PRESS RELEASE 18th June, 1994
- A NEW EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
- EERA Council
- QUESTIONNAIRE on organisation, structure and problems of educational R&D in European countries [Armin Gretler]
- Research Networks Terms of Reference May 1996
- Research Networks
- EERA Policy on refereeing 1999
- Cross-Network Symposia at ECER2000
- The Role of the Secretary General -EERA -1999/2002
- EERA REVIEW 1998 - 2001
- EERA and Education Research in Europe [Lawn and Lindblad ]
- March 2001
- Review Group Report [EERA Council]
- Review group Meeting – Murcia, Spain, 2-3 November 2001
11. References


