VMEBUS USER GROUPS

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There is much activity within the European research community on VMEbus systems and the need for some form of collaboration in this area at a European level is thought to be beneficial. We have therefore to consider what form this activity should take to obtain maximum benefit for our users.

Two major questions arise, one, the common sharing of our technical developments and two, the best approach to the growing number of worldwide VMEbus manufacturers. In addition, it is also essential that we have some voice in the future standardisation activities which will take place in the VMEbus field.

In the area of sharing technical expertise and development, it is hoped that we can collaborate via the VMEbus working group which has been set up by ESONE (European Standards Organisation for Nuclear Electronics) under the Chairmanship of Chris Eck at CERN. If, however, we are to have strong influence on standardisation and the industrial manufacturers, it is essential that we are associated to the much larger user community of potential and current VMEbus users.

VITA (VMEbus International Trade Association) has declared its intention of forming user groups throughout the world for the purpose of education, liaison, association with the manufacturers and the promotion of the VMEbus standards, and it is to this organisation we must affiliate to make our views known.

VITA users are already operational in the USA and it is in our own interest to ensure that an active user group organisation is created in Europe.

To form user groups in Europe does, however, bring its own problems, we have our own national factors to consider, we do not have a common language and therefore many documents will need to printed in more than one language, in some cases there are regulations about finance which would make difficult a single European committee consisting of representatives from each country.

Under the proposed VITA structure it is also seen that regional and local VITA groups will be formed if the membership numbers make this valid. The VITA structure also allows for special interest groups to be represented at European level if their size and/or influence justify this, and it at this level we expect our community to be represented via the ESONE working group.

To start the formation of VMEbus user groups in Europe, I am trying to find volunteers to act as the initial national chairmen and for some countries we already have a nominee who is prepared to take on this task. It is also obvious that we will need the help and support of the VMEbus manufacturers in the formation of these national groups and this they seem willing to provide.

It will, of course, take some time to get User Groups into action, as most of the people involved will, like me, have full time jobs and therefore only be able to attend to VMEbus user matters in their own spare time and we will require the help of all interested people during the initial stages.
Some documentation is in preparation and we will contact all those who have already expressed an interest during the conference. If, however, you wish to register your interest then please refer to the contact list below.

Most of us are convinced of the need to have a strong user association and VITA seems to be the best way of achieving these aims, I would ask you all to help make VITA USERS EUROPE an active and expanding organisation.

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