

VET at level 5

tension between academic and vocational drift

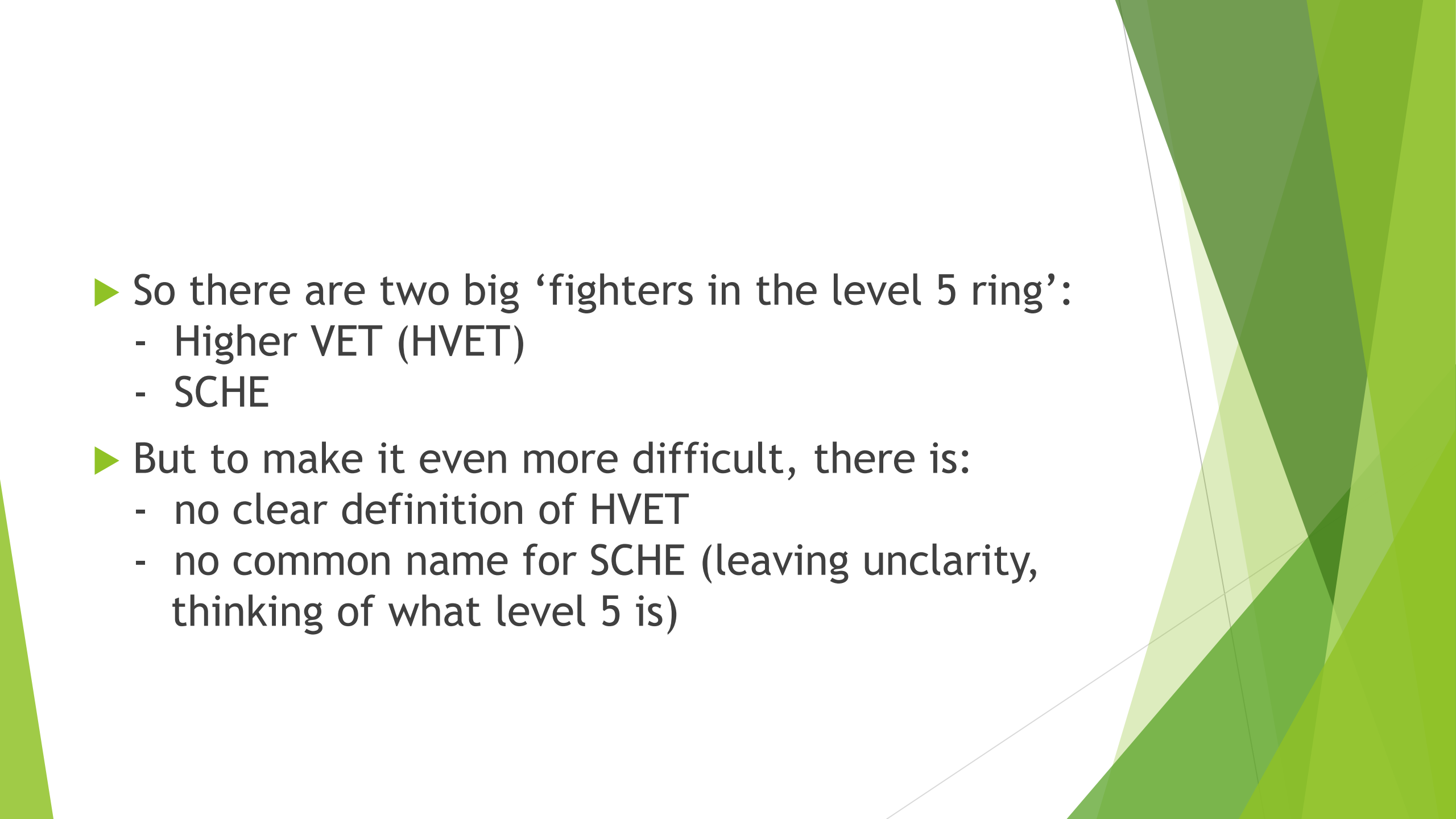
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To what extent is European Higher Education characterised by ‘academic or vocational drift’?

- ▶ It’s not a problem! It’s a challenge!
- ▶ But... it can happen, as it is the result of having not a clear idea of what the European Level 5 Area is and it must have been:
 - forgotten in the Bologna Process at the start of it
 - a decision taken after the introduction of the EQF, to have level 4 as the highest level for diplomas giving access to HE - including VET4

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- ▶ So there are two big ‘fighters in the level 5 ring’:
 - Higher VET (HVET)
 - SCHE
 - ▶ But to make it even more difficult, there is:
 - no clear definition of HVET
 - no common name for SCHE (leaving unclarity, thinking of what level 5 is)


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- ▶ It doesn't have to be in practice a real problem if a National Higher Education Area is based on a binary system:
 - Academic oriented
 - Professional orientedhaving two types for institutions
or having
 - a broad spectrum of learning pathways within a HEI itself
 - ▶ But a problem for the professional oriented sector is, how do we call it:
 - Higher Professional Educationor
 - Professional Higher Education?

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- ▶ The approach for HPE/PHE within a HEI has to be:
 - Professional Education at the higher levels
 - Focus on the labour market, to combine professional competences and applied research
 - ▶ HEIs: Leave the provision of the ‘pure vocational competences’ to other institutions, strong in offering programmes in close collaboration with the world of work

- ▶ And take care for progression routes from VET-4 to qualifications of the National HEA (NHEA)
- ▶ And allow as government that the system has also a binary situation at level 5, if possible and relevant for having flexible learning pathways:
 - SCHE within the NHEA = combining professional competences with some applied research
 - HVET = combining vocational competences and professional oriented units

What are the main challenges faced by vocationally oriented education and training at higher levels

- ▶ VET has to stick to its own approach, using its strengths as VET sector
- ▶ Use the practical orientation of VET (two sub-sectors: VE and T) - always!
- ▶ Take the lead - with employers' organisations and other stakeholders - for an 'effective' higher level qualification within the National Level 5 Area (NL5A)

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- ▶ Have a grip on discussions with the government about its role in LLL and flexibility (and perhaps having public financing - if not, use work-based learning)
 - ▶ Don't accept 'second best solutions', in reality being thresholds designed by HEIs - for blocking a smooth 'permeability' between VET and HE

What can be the role of Higher VET in the coming decades

- ▶ Take as VET sector the lead for a clear definition of this type of qualification
- ▶ Use the European Level 5 Area (EL5A) as basis
- ▶ Combine Vocational and Professional Education and Training:
 - keep in mind that it is HE and not HET
 - try be different from Higher Professional Education
 - don't use 'higher' - giving the wrong impression
- ▶ And use it for Apprenticeships at level 5 (job-based)

- ▶ Use specific, effective en unique instruments for the EL5A - already existing or to be developed in the near future
- ▶ And use for higher levels the term VPET:
 - VPET A for level 5
 - VPET B for level 6
 - VPET C for level 7



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