

REPORT ON THE EATCS COUNCIL MEETING

ICALP 2016, Rome, 12–13 July 2016

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The EATCS Council meeting took place over lunch on the 12th and the 13th of July 2016 during ICALP 2016 in Rome. This piece provides a brief and informal report on the discussions that took place at the meeting for the benefit of our members.

1 Tuesday, 12 July 2015: 13:00–14:50: Agenda and executive summary

1.1 Appointment of the new leadership of the EATCS

Josep Diaz presented the work of the search committee for the new president of the EATCS and the rationale behind the committee's proposal. The search committee suggested that Paul Spirakis be elected as new president of the EATCS. Paul proposed Leslie Ann Goldberg, Antonin Kucera and Giuseppe Persiano as vice-presidents. The council asked Paul for a short description of his programme as president of the EATCS and Paul answered some other questions from the council members. After this discussion, the council approved the new leadership, which will start its term of service after ICALP 2016 in Rome.

1.2 Report from the secretary

Ioannis Chatzigiannakis presented a report from the secretary office¹.

The president (Luca Aceto) thanked Efi Chita and Ioannis for their sterling work.

1.3 Report from the treasurer

Dirk Janssens gave his report on the finances of the EATCS². After 27 years of sterling service, Dirk left his post as treasurer of the EATCS. The president thanked Dirk for his service to the association.

¹<http://icetcs.ru.is/luca/files/2016-secretary-report-GA.pdf>

²<http://icetcs.ru.is/luca/files/FinancialReport16.pdf>

1.4 Approval of the accounts and discharging Dirk of financial obligations

Following Dirk's financial report, the EATCS Council approved the accounts of the association and formally discharged Dirk of financial obligations

1.5 Appointment of the new treasurer of the EATCS

The EATCS Council appointed Jean-Francois Raskin as the new treasurer of our association. The president thanked Jean-Francois for his willingness to serve.

1.6 Moving the seat of the association to Universit© Libre de Bruxelles

Dirk discussed the steps that remain to be taken in order to move the seat of the EATCS to Universit© Libre de Bruxelles (ULB). The EATCS Secretary Office is collecting the required information on all the changes to the EATCS Council since 1988.

Dirk also said that we will need to have an official translation of the statutes of the EATCS in French and that he has sought some professional help in order to settle the legal matters related to preserving the EATCS as a non-profit association under Belgian law and to moving its seat to ULB.

1.7 Journal of the EATCS: outcome of the feasibility study

Tony Kucera presented the report on the feasibility study conducted by a committed appointed by the president of the EATCS. The president of the EATCS had circulated the documentation prepared by the committee via email before the meeting.

Tony's presentation was followed by a very interesting and thought-provoking discussion. Some council members expressed worries related to the need of having another journal and to the fact that it was not clear that the journal could maintain a high standard and could compete with established journals. Some others said that, while perhaps there was no need for another journal, there was a need for a high-quality, open-access outlet for journal papers in TCS, broadly construed. Some council members expressed some doubt about the relationship that such a journal, if ever it sees the light of day, should have with the EATCS. Paul Spirakis suggested that we should find out in what way, for instance, the Journal of the ACM is related to the ACM as an association.

The president said that, in his opinion, the EATCS should establish the proposed journal only as a service to the TCS community, if the community thinks

that there is indeed a need for a high-quality, open-access outlet for journal papers in TCS, broadly construed. The poll amongst the members of the EATCS that was held some time ago and email exchanges with prominent members of the community seemed to indicate that the community was supportive of the idea.

In order to address some of the worries related to the quality of the proposed journal in the first few years of its existence, if the EATCS ends up establishing it, the Council decided that the committee responsible for the feasibility study should prepare a manifesto for the journal and accompany it with a list of high profile TCS researchers who pledge to support it by submitting some of their best work to it in the five years of its existence and when it won't have an impact factor. Timothy Gower's *Discrete Analysis* journal got off the ground by publishing high profile papers from top class mathematicians and, in particular, a paper by Terence Tao on his solution of the Erdős Discrepancy Problem.

2 Wednesday, 19 July, from 13:00–14:50: Agenda and executive summary

2.1 One-off payment to the Helmut Veith Award fund

The president proposed that the EATCS contribute to the award in memory of Helmut Veith, established by the University of Vienna to support promising students. The Council approved the proposal to donate 500 Euros to the award fund.

2.2 Dealing with the increase in the LIPIcs APC

The president proposed that, for future editions of ICALP, the LIPIcs APC be paid by the ICALP participants as done this year. The proposal was approved by the EATCS Council.

2.3 ICALP 2016 report from the conference organizers

Tiziana Calamoneri presented the report from the organizers³. She also discussed the possible causes for the lack of workshops at this year's ICALP.

Tiziana's presentation was followed by a very lively discussion. Yuval Rabani said that a conference such as ICALP should have about 300 participants each time. He speculated that the cost of attending the conference are too high in general. Pierre Fraigniaud said that a way to keep the registration fees as low as possible would be to fix the fees beforehand and see what can be done with the

³http://icetcs.ru.is/luca/files/ICALP2016summary_Short.pdf

available funding. This is the model that has been adopted in the organization of HALG, where the registration fee was 100 Euros.

Jukka Suomela suggested that ICALP consider soliciting and accepting “brief announcements” like PODC does. There was some discussion on this point, with pros and cons of Jukka’s proposal being aired. Jukka was given the task to prepare a proposal for “brief announcements” at ICALP that will be considered by the Council.

The council also discussed why ICALP is not considered an A* conference by some widely used rankings, such as CORE. The Council agreed that it was important that its members submit their best work to ICALP and that ICALP is advertised as the best, broad theory conference.

2.4 ICALP 2016 report PC chairs

Yuval Rabani delivered the report from the PC chairs⁴. The report was largely factual. During his report, Yuval mentioned the relatively low number of submission in learning to ICALP 2016.

2.5 Report on the organization of ICALP 2017

Mikolaj Bojanczyk presented a report on the status of the organization of ICALP 2017. The organization is very much on track and there are already four workshops that will co-locate with the conference. Three of the four invited speakers have been selected.

Tony Kucera asked whether ICALP should consider implementing a rebuttal phase during the PC meeting like other conferences do. During the ensuing discussion, several opinions were aired. Some felt that having a rebuttal phase would help to ensure that all the reports on the papers are delivered on time and would increase their quality. Others felt that papers for which a rebuttal phase might help clarify matters could be handled by other, lightweight means, such as contacting the authors for clarifications on controversial points, even if this might be seen as introducing a little unfairness in the process. The main constraint is the very short time that the ICALP PCs have for their reviews and for selecting a conference programme.

The Council should keep discussing this matter.

⁴<http://icetcs.ru.is/luca/files/PC-report.pdf>

2.6 ICALP 2018 bid presented

JiTM Sgall presented a bid to host ICALP 2018 in Prague in the period 9–13 July 2018⁵. The bid was accepted by the General Assembly of the EATCS held on Thursday, 14 July.

2.7 The present and the future of ICALP Track C

Michael Mitzenmacher gave his opinion on the current status of Track C. Despite the best efforts of the PC chairs of the last few years to "brand" this track as a "theory of networking" track, it is fair to say that Track C is still being seen as a less competitive version of Track A. (Note: This opinion was independently reiterated by Mikkel Thorup during the general assembly. Mikkel asked: "What is the role of the current Track C rather than allowing PC members for Track A to submit to the conference?")

The president reminded the Council that Track C was meant to cover "emerging areas" and that its scope should therefore be regularly considered. During the ensuing discussion, Paul Spirakis suggested that perhaps Track C could be solely devoted to Algorithmic Game Theory.

The Council will continue discussing the future of Track C and what its focus should be from 2018 onwards.

2.8 EATCS Young Researcher Schools

Tony Kucera gave a report on the status of the EATCS Young Researcher Schools and presented a new joint series with ETAPS, SIGLOG and SIGPLAN that will kick off next year with a school on probabilistic programming. This joint series of schools will be held in 2017, 2018 and every two years thereafter. The council approved the establishment of this new school series and the EATCS sponsorship for it. From now on, the council will formally approve the sponsorship of EATCS schools.

Tony encouraged the Volume A community to submit proposals for Young Researcher Schools, especially in odd years. It was suggested that such schools might be co-located with HALG. Pierre Fraigniaud contacted Artur Czumaj, who chairs the SC for HALG.

⁵<http://icetcs.ru.is/luca/files/ICALP2018.pdf>