REPORT ON THE EATCS COUNCIL MEETING

ICALP 2015, Kyoto, Tuesday, 6–7 July 2015

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The EATCS Council meeting took place over lunch on the 6th and the 7th of July 2015 during ICALP 2015 in Kyoto. This piece provides a brief and informal report on the discussions that took place at the meeting for the benefit of our members.

1 Monday, 6 July 2015: 12:00–13:20

The president welcomed the participants in the meeting and showed the current membership figures before ICALP. The number of members at this point in 2014 was 1146 (396 in the young researcher category) and is now 1067 (575 in the young researcher category). The membership is still higher than it has been since 2005 and it is good to see that nearly 54% of our members are young researchers. This seems to indicate that the younger members of our community still find that the EATCS plays a relevant role for the TCS community. Another possible reason for the increase in the number of young researchers is that they attend the conferences that collect EATCS membership fees, which is also good.

1.1 ICALP-related matters

Brief reports from the PC chairs and the organizers of ICALP 2015 Kazuo Iwama gave a brief report about the conference. There were 400 registered participants at ICALP/LICS 2015 by the early registration deadline and 200 people registered for the workshops. Kazuo did not know how many of the workshop attendees did not attend the main conferences. There was one registration fee for both ICALP and LICS, which were truly co-located, so it does not make sense to ask how many of the 400 attendees were registered for ICALP.

The budget for ICALP/LICS 2015 was roughly of 192,000 Euros. Generous sponsorship from several sources (see `http://www.kurims.kyoto-u.ac.jp/icalp-lics2015/sponsors.html`) helped to keep the registration fees low.

The PC chairs did not have anything specific to point out before their presentation at the EATCS General Assembly. However, there was a lengthy discussion on format rejects (that is, papers rejected without refereeing for violating the stated submission requirements). See below for a brief account of that discussion.

Format rejects and submission guidelines for future ICALPs   After requesting the approval of the EATCS leadership, Bettina Speckmann (PC chair for Track A of ICALP 2015) decided to reject 22 of the 328 submissions to Track A for violating the stated submission requirements. The definition of 'violating the submission requirements' was decided by the PC for Track A, which applied it consistently in its decisions.

Bettina argued cogently for the use of format rejects in future editions of the conference. Several counter-arguments were put forward eloquently by Yuval, Paul Beame and Paul Spirakis, amongst others.

Not surprisingly, this is an issue on which several perfectly valid viewpoints exist, and the lengthy and interesting discussion reflected them. At the end, we decided to avoid micromanagement and that this point will be handled by the PC chairs of future ICALP conferences in cooperation with the leadership. The submission guidelines for future ICALPs will, however, be made as clear as possible since even some very experienced members of the TCS community fell foul of format rejects.

On a related note, we discussed the submission guidelines for future ICALPs in the light of the move to LIPIcs. So far the length of the published ICALP papers has been limited by the maximum size of the physical LNCS proceeding volumes, which the proceedings of Track A have largely exceeded already over the last two years. With the move to LIPIcs, such a physical limitation disappears. However, there was general agreement at the meeting that we won't drastically change the length of the submitted papers and of the published papers. Forcing authors to present their main contributions within, say, 12 LIPIcs pages in a way that is accessible to a broad TCS audience, such as the one attending ICALP, helps the PC in their difficult job of selecting a good programme for the conference. Moreover, setting an upper bound on the length of the published papers maintains the distinction between conference and journal publication, and will allow authors of ICALP papers to submit extended versions of their work to journals, where they will be subjected to a more thorough technical review.

Possible length and submission requirements were discussed at the meeting. However, we decided that the PC chairs for ICALP 2016 will draft clear submission guidelines in cooperation with me.

Other issues related to the structure of future ICALPS (such as length of talks and acceptance rates) were discussed during the general assembly. I will discuss the opinions of the attendees in my report on the general assembly in Kyoto. The short story is that the attendees at the general assembly were happy with 25 minute talks and with the present acceptance rates.

Change to LIPIcs   With the move to LIPIcs, we decided to have a proceedings chair, who will relieve the PC chairs and the organizers from much of the burden of putting together the LIPIcs proceedings. I am pleased to inform you that Ioannis Chatzigiannakis (the secretary of the EATCS) has agreed to be proceedings chair for the period 2016–2018. Thanks to Ioannis for his willingness to serve in this role!

Future ICALPs   I informed the council that the organization of ICALP 2016 was going well and that Mikolaj Bojanczyk was going to present a bid to hold ICALP 2017 in Warsaw at the general assembly. (Note: The bid was accepted by the General Assembly.) Jiri Sgall is preparing a bid to host ICALP 2018 in Prague.

For the future, we discussed the possibility of having an ongoing call for 'ICALP bids'. Nobody was against this idea, which we will implement.

Since many changes have taken place at ICALP recently, it is time for the ICALP Liaison Committee to prepare a new version of the guidelines for ICALP organizers.

1.2   Networking

Relationships with sister societies   Michael Mitzenmacher has taken over from Paul Beame as chair of ACM SIGACT. Traditionally, the chair of SIGACT serves as an appointed member of the EATCS council and Michael therefore will take Paul's place. I take this opportunity to thank Paul for his contribution to the council and for the insightful input he provided during the council meeting in Kyoto. Thanks Paul!

EATCS is cooperating with the recently formed ACM SIGLOG. Together with SIGLOG, the EACSL and the Kurt Gödel Society, the EATCS is working on the establishment of the Alonzo Church Prize. The ACM is currently examining the proposal they received from Prakash Panangaden (chair of SIGLOG). Our hope is that we can issue the first call for nominations for the award by the end of this year and that the first Church Prize can be presented in the summer of 2016.

The chair of TC1 has invited the EATCS to have a representative in the council of IFIP TC1. Alberto Marchetti Spaccamela will play this role. Thanks to Alberto!

I asked the council for suggestions on how the EATCS might possibly establish cooperation with national sister societies, such as the section of the German GI for theory, the French 'Groupe de Recherche Informatique Mathématiques' (`https://www.gdr-im.fr`) and the British Computer Society. Please let me know of any idea you might have.

Sponsoring of conferences The number of conferences we sponsor has increased as we are trying to give back to the community more of what it gives us via the membership fees. Amongst others, we are supporting CCC, which has recently become independent of IEEE, and we offered some modest support to SoCG 2015. Compatibly with our finances, we hope to continue our cooperation with these events and other suitably high-quality ones.

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The meeting started with reports from the secretary and the treasurer of the association, which were also repeated during the general assembly. Financially, the bottom line is that we are in excellent shape, but that, in the future, we will have to take into account the fact that with the move to LIPIcs we will lose some of the revenue coming from our largest sponsor, viz. Springer. You can read all the details in the EATCS Annual Report that will soon be available on line. I thanked Ioannis, Efi and Dirk for their great work.

Future of the EATCS as a non-profit scientific association and new treasurer
After 27 years as treasurer of the EATCS, Dirk Janssens has decided that he will resign from ICALP 2016, at the latest. This prompted an examination of the status of the EATCS as a non-profit association under Belgian law.

After some preliminary investigations by Dirk, Ioannis and Jos, it seems that it would be desirable to keep the EATCS as an association legally based in Belgium. This is made non-trivial by the fact that the EATCS has very few members in Belgium.

However, we are lucky that our colleague and EATCS member Jean-Francois Raskin (ULB) is willing to help us keep the EATCS in Belgium. On behalf of the EATCS, I thank Jean-Francois for his support.

During the meeting, Dirk Janssens clearly highlighted the steps that need to be taken in order to keep the EATCS in Belgium and to transfer its legal address from Antwerp to ULB. The following actions are taken to prepare for this.

- Jean-Francois Raskin attends the council meeting.

- Both the council and Jean-Francois Raskin express the intention that he will succeed Dirk Janssens as treasurer, no later than July 2016.

- Jean-Francois Raskin should get access to the EATCS accounts, both to enable him to gradually take on the workload and to serve as a backup in case Dirk Jansens became unavailable for some unforeseen reason.

The council approved the proposed steps and the move of the legal address of the EATCS from Antwerp to ULB.

For practical reasons, it is natural for Jean-Francois to take over the role of treasurer of the EATCS from Dirk. However, we agreed that the treasurer has far too many duties at this point in time and that it is time to automate, or to delegate to other council members, some of the tasks that are currently carried out by Dirk. Paul Beame pointed out the example of the Computational Complexity Foundation, which I will examine closely.

We agreed that I will look into the matter, together with Dirk and Ioannis, in order to make the role of the future treasurer as clear as possible and to maximize efficiency. It would also be good for everyone to know what role each of us plays or can play in the running of the council and of the EATCS as a whole.

In addition, it is now time for the EATCS to use an accountancy firm for filing tax reports and related matters, and we will do so.

Dirk also suggested that, in the light of the few Belgian members of the association, it might also be a good idea for the EATCS to establish a 'virtual office' in a country such as Switzerland or the UK, as this would give the association a 'plan B' in the future. This suggestion was well received. Ioannis and I will explore this option.

What should the EATCS do for the community? If you have suggestions on this point, please let me know.

Council elections The council reviewed the nominations received before the General Assembly at ICALP 2015.

Journal of the EATCS In email discussion, the council had examined the possibility of starting an open access 'Journal of the EATCS'. I recalled that the next step was to hold a poll amongst our members. Jos (Baeten) will draft the text of the poll together with me.

Other matters We agreed to renew our sponsorship for the open-access journal Logical Methods in Computer Science for two more years (2016–2017).