# EATCS Golden Jubilee: How EATCS was born 50 years ago and why it is still alive and well.

Giorgio Ausiello

Sapienza Università di Roma
ausiello@diag.uniroma1.it

## The background

It was the year 1970 when Maurice Nivat, young mathematician, and his mentor Marcel-Paul Schützenberger, recently appointed director at IRIA (now INRIA), announce in a press conference, to about fifteen specialized journalists, the birth of a new scientific discipline that they call 'informatique thèorique' (i.e. theoretical computer science): 'the science which makes use of mathematical and logical tools to clarify and study the notion of computation'. Also the three great domains that formed the core of such new science were identified in the conference: the theory of automata and formal languages, the theory of algorithms and of computational complexity, and the theory of computer programming. "I don't know what happened to us on that day" says Maurice Nivat in 2008, in an interview with the journalist Isabelle Bellin. "The reality is that 40 years later this discipline exists and the number of researchers devoted to this domain of computer science has now increased fifty or may be one hundred times"[1].

Actually, as we all know, the study of mathematical foundations of computer science was not born in 1970; it had already a long history at that time. Theoretical issues in computing had been a research subject since the years Thirties, when the work of Alan Turing, Alonzo Church, Emil Post, and other logicians, had been focused on the characterization of computability and on the discovery of non computable functions and undecidable problems. Indeed these studies had been

[1] I. Bellin, Maurice Nivat: une vision à long terme de la recherche en informatique, https://hal.inria.fr/hal-01350155/

sources of inspiration for the creation of the first electronic computers. Subsequently, after the creation of the first generation of electronic computers technology again passed the floor to theory. Throughout the years Fifties and Sixties, a large amount of concepts and results regarding foundational aspects of computing devices and programming had been achieved and in 1970 such concepts and such results were already considered cornerstones of computer science. Just to make a few examples, in the area of models of computation we can remember the concepts of neural networks (McCulloch and Pitts, 1955) and the first examples of non deterministic processes (Rabin and Scott, 1959); regarding program syntax, we may remember the complete characterization of Chomsky languages in terms of generating grammars and of recognizing automata (Oettinger, Schützenberger, Myhill, Kuroda, Greibach, 1960-1965); regarding control structures in programs we have the results of Böhm and Jacopini (1966) that are at the base of structured programming; in program semantics we may consider the first notions of operational and denotational semantics (McCarthy, 1960, and Strachey, 1964), and the notion of axiomatic semantics (Floyd and Hoare, 1969); finally it is worth remembering the first results addressing the notion of computational complexity (Rabin, 1960, Hartmanis and Stearns, 1965, and Blum, 1966).

Two textbooks, appeared respectively in 1967 and in 1969, “Computation. Finite and Infinite Machines" by Minsky, and "Formal Languages and Their Relation to Automata” by Hopcroft and Ullman show that theoretical issues in computer science were already well defined and present in university curricula when the press conference of Nivat and Schützenberger took place.

So, what was the reason that moved Nivat and Schützenberger to announce the birth of a new scientifique domain? Actually, if we look back at those times we realize that there were many reasons to publicize and try to identify the new scientific domain. First of all the relentless growth of computer applications in all fields of human activity, banks, industry, public administration, that was taking place in those years was characterizing informatics essentially from the technological point of view, leaving in the back the foundational studies that were necessary to improve correctness and efficiency of applications. This was leading, at least in Europe, to lack of recognition in the academic world and inadequate funding for theoretical computer science with respect to other established domains like mathematics, physics, electrical engineering. In Italy mathematicians viewed computers just as tools for numerical computing, totally ignoring that, behind the instrument, another new mathematical discipline, the science of computing, was being shaped. This was not only happening in Italy but was a general attitude of mathematicians toward computer science. One of the leading figures in theoretical computer science, Michael Rabin, recalls: “There was absolutely no appreciation of the work

on the issues of computing. Mathematicians did not recognize the emerging new field", and from this point of view it is also interesting what Edsger Dijkstra said about his appointment at the Department of Mathematics at Eindhoven University of Technology: "Later I learned that I had been the department's third choice, after two numerical analysts had turned the invitation down" [2]. In any case, despite important achievements in some fields such as, for example, programming language design (think of the Algol 60 Report, mostly based on European contributions, and of the creation of the language Simula 67, a prototype of object oriented languages, implemented by Dahl and Nygaard) or software engineering (the first conference in this field took place in Garmish in 1968 thanks to the energetic role of various European scientists) European computer scientists were perceiving the existence of a large gap between the great development of US research in all aspects of computer science, and in theory in particular, and the European situation.

Also from the organizational point of view the European situation was lagging behind that in US. In 1968 ACM had created the Special Interest Group on Automata and Computability Theory (SIGACT, now Special Interest Group on Algorithms and Computation Theory) and in 1969 Patrick Fisher, the first Chair of SIGACT, professor at Waterloo, had started the Symposium on Theory of Computing (STOC). This was the second important US conference entirely devoted to theoretical computer science, the oldest being the IEEE Annual Symposium on Switching Circuit Theory and Logical Design (created in 1959 and in 1966 renamed Switching and Automata Theory [3]). No such scientific environment existed at European scale in the Sixties. Due to such situation European researchers did not have suitable occasions to meet. It was more customary for an Italian, French, British researcher to be in contact with US correspondents than with other European colleagues.

With all this in mind Maurice Nivat, Louis Nolin and Marcel-Paul Schützenberger moved in 1971 a second step that has become crucial in the development of the European theoretical computer science community. On June 25 a letter, prompted by Maurice Nivat and his colleagues, was sent by the Director of the Mathematics Department of the University of Paris VII François Bruhat to the European Commission. The letter recommended a cooperation concerning education and research in theoretical computer science to be established among European universities. The objective of the cooperation would be "to promote the exchange of information and of scientific results in the field and to organize specialized

[2] In this article various excerpts are taken from: G. Ausiello, The Making of a New Science, Springer 2018.

[3] In 1975 the conference received the current title: Foundations of Computer Science (FOCS).

schools and conferences, and visits of young researchers in laboratories of other countries" (a kind of ante litteram Marie Curie fellowship program). Besides Paris VII, the sites indicated as possible partners in the initiative were: Saarbrücken and Munich in Germany, Rome, Pisa and Turin in Italy, Amsterdam and Brussels for The Netherlands and Belgium, Paris VII and Toulouse for France. Furthermore, in the United Kingdom (at the time not a member of the EEC) the universities of Warwick, Edinburgh and Colchester would be invited to join the project.

According to Nivat's memories: "It was an extraordinary moment for computer science. University courses were started in various countries in Europe and elsewhere, computers had allowed humanity to reach the moon but informatics was not yet perceived as a real science. At the two Software Engineering conferences in Garmisch (1968) and Rome (1969) it had been realized that informatics could not be seriously developed without a solid methodological approach. But at the same time it was made clear that programming techniques and methods conceived by 'software engineers' could not reach their aims unless the notions of semantics, and complexity of computation could be analyzed on the basis of mathematical and logical rigorous foundations".

Indeed Nivat remembers that already in 1968 he had discussed with Alfonso Caracciolo, professor in Pisa, the possibility to create a European coperation in theoretical informatics. "It was 1968 when in a meeting I met an Italian fellow, Alfonso Caracciolo di Forino, who impressed me a lot for many reasons: he belonged to the noble Neapolitan family of the admiral Caracciolo who was hanged in 1799, ... chatting after the meeting he told Schützenberger and myself that, maybe, it would be possible to create a European entity dealing with the theoretical aspects of computer science since theory can be pursued with little money and does not raise the unsolvable financial and economic problems that were at stake when talking about cooperation in the software industry. He suggested that we create a European association" [4].

Four years later it was thanks to the support of Alfonso Caracciolo, at that time involved in the European PREST and COST initiatives for technological cooperation, that the proposal of the French colleagues successfully led to the meeting in Brussels that saw the birth of EATCS.

[4]M. Nivat, The True Story of TCS, Theoretical Computer Science, Special Issue for TCS 40th Anniversary (2015).

# The Brussels meeting

The meeting took place on January 27th and 28th, 1972 under the title "Cooperation in the Field of Theoretical Data Processing" and it was chaired by Alfonso Caracciolo. The documents presented at the meeting contained three position papers on theoretical computer science.

The first, prepared by Nivat, Nolin and Schützenberger had been circulated since June 1971 as an attachment to Bruhat's letter. It was a 12 pages document containing, for the first time, the definition of the field of 'informatique théorique' (and also of the mathematical domains that, although related to computing, could not be classified theoretical computer science, such as numerical analysis and operations research). The field was articulated in three main chapters, theory of automata and formal languages, theory of algorithms and computational complexity, programming theory and for each chapter examples of the main results achieved until now were exposed. The second document had been prepared by Jaco de Bakker. Here it is claimed that the most important applications of theoretical computer science should be oriented toward i) improvements of 'individual programs' in terms of efficiency and correctness, ii) to the study of 'classes of programs' such as those for non-numerical applications and those devoted to data management, iii) to the formal definition of 'programming languages' both in terms of syntax and semantics, and finally iv) to the design of 'operating systems'. The third document had been prepared by Corrado Böhm. It starts by saying that 'theoretical informatics' was at that time not yet settled and well understood but the results of its development might have been 'explosive' with influence on all aspects of computing: hardware, basic software (operating systems, networks, programming languages), applications (efficiency of algorithms, correctness, software certification etc.). Overall we can observe that the vision of the founding fathers was definitely wide and farsighted. Besides in Nivat's document it was clearly stated that it was impossible to circumscribe the areas of a newly born science whose results might reach unforseeable goals.

Researchers from six countries plus several officers of the European Commission took part in the meeting. France was represented by Maurice Nivat, Louis Nolin, and the linguist Maurice Gross; Germany by Hans Langmaack and Karl Heinz Böhling, The Netherlands by Leo Verbeek and Jaco de Bakker, the UK by Mike Paterson, Belgium by Michael Sintzoff, Italy by Corrado Böhm, Ugo Montanari and Giorgio Ausiello. The agenda of the meeting included a survey of the activity of the Group PREST, the presentation by Louis Nolin of the French document containing the definition of the field of 'informatique théorique' and an overview of the importance of the field, an examination of the situation in the different

countries, and finally the presentation, discussion and, possibly, approval of the proposal prepared by Maurice Nivat on the cooperation among universities. This was indeed the hottest issue. Finally the general idea of the creation of a European organization for theoretical computer science was approved.

At first the idea was to follow the EMBO (European Molecular Biology Organization) example and to ask for a substantial funding from European institutions (80.000 US dollars for the first year supposed to grow to 200.000 US dollars in the subsequent years). In fact a few years before, in 1966, EMBO had been created with the aim to promote such discipline and to support scientific cooperation at European level among research institutions and universities, and had been assigned a relevant dowry that allowed to develop an ambitious program foreseeing organization of conferences, fellowships, exchange of visits, etc. After not so long it became clear that the EMBO experience could not be followed because to obtain funds from EEC was becoming hard. This is also reflected in the changes in the title of the initiative and in the articles of the proposed statute. At the beginning a document dated February 7th has the title 'Institut Européen d'Informatique Théorique' and considers that the institute should consist of 'associated institutes' and of simple 'members'. Subsequently the proposal had been transformed into Association Européenne d'Informatique Théorique – AEIT (in English European Association for Theoretical Computer Science – EATCS), and while still open to the participation of institutional members it had been conceived essentially as an association of 'individual members'.

Various provisional drafts of the statutes of the association prepared by EEC legal experts were circulated. On June 24th (official date of the constitution of EATCS) Michael Sintzoff met with de Bakker, Nivat and Paterson and they prepared the final documents for the creation of EATCS to be submitted to EEC and to Belgian authorities. The document would carry the names of the founders: Giorgio Ausiello (Italy), Jaco de Bakker (The Netherlands), Maurice Nivat (France), Mike Paterson (UK), Manfred Paul (Germany, rather, to be more precise, the Federal Republic of Germany), Michel Sintzoff (Belgium), and Leo Verbeek (The Netherlands). In the same meeting it was decided to nominate Leo Verbeek as president, Manfred Paul and Mike Paterson as vice-presidents, Maurice Nivat as secretary and Michael Sintzoff as treasurer. The process had its conclusion on September 4th, 1972 with the signature of a royal decree by the King of Belgium which set forth the creation of the 'Association Européenne d'Informatique Théorique' and the approval of its statute.

So, formally the association was there but how to give it life? After the creation of the scientific organization it was necessary to create the scientific community.

# The first steps

The first step in the creation of the European theoretical computer science community was indeed already moved in July 1972 with the conference that Maurice Nivat organized in Paris (in the premises of IRIA). The title of the conference reflected the taxonomy of theoretical computer science that Maurice and his French colleagues had sketched in the charter of 'informatique théorique': Colloque sur la Théorie des Automates, des Langages et de la Programmation. The Program Committee was composed by outstanding computer scientists: Corrado Böhm, Samuel Eilenberg, Pat Fischer, Seymour Ginzburg, Gunther Hotz, Michael Rabin, Arto Salomaa, Adriaan van Wijngaarden. It was chaired by the father of the French school of theoretical computer science: Marcel-Paul Schützenberger. The conference had a big success and was attended, either as speakers or as participants, by a large group of young scientists that would make the history of theoretical computer science in the future years. The proceedings were published by North Holland and contained 49 papers. It is interesting to know that 34 papers were in English, 14 in French, and 1 in German. ICALP (the International Colloquium on Automata, Languages and Programming) was born. While the first edition of the conference was sponsored by ACM-SIGACT since the edition of 1974 the conference will be sponsored by EATCS and since 1976 will become the big annual event that we all know, one of the major world events in theoretical computer science.

The next important step that was taken to make EATCS grow was to get involved in the project a large number of colleagues from all over the world. In September 1972 Maurice Nivat sent an invitation letter to a long list of scientists in Europe, US and Israel (but he already had in mind the involvement of computer scientists also from Soviet Union, India and Japan). Nivat was soliciting our colleagues to join EATCS "not only to give it life but also to contribute to define aims, scope and activities". As we will see the need to open the scope of EATCS beyond the research fields defined in the first documents has been a constant objective of the founders. One of the characters that make EATCS alive and well after so many years derives from the effort that, throughout these years, the scientists that have led the Association have put to constantly update the scientific horizon of our research domain and to open the annual conference to new hot and stimulating subjects.

March 24th-25th, 1973 marks another important date: the first General Assembly of EATCS took place in Warwick, hosted by Mike Paterson. During the meeting the first Council of EATCS was elected by adding to the founding members six leading figures of theory of computing from Europe and US (C. Böhm, W. Brauer,

B. Mayoh, R. Milner, J.F. Perrot, D. Scott).

Then the Council appointed Maurice Nivat President of EATCS and de Bakker and Paterson Vice-Presidents. In order to circulate information and promote the exchange of ideas in the community it was decided that beside organizing an annual conference and supporting specific informal events EATCS would have initiated to edit a scientific bulletin containing information regarding open problems, events and activity of research groups. A second General Assembly took place in Hamburg on October 7, 1973 and in that occasion the Council was further enlarged to include members from Israel (Z. Manna), Switzerland (E. Engeler) and Finland (A. Salomaa).

In December 1973 Maurice Nivat edited the first EATCS Bulletin. Again the issue of broadening the scope of the Association is addressed by Nivat in the Editorial when he says that the initial list of topics identifying the scope of the Association is by no means limitative: "defining the limits of theoretical computer science is at least as difficult as defining the limits of computer science itself. And we strongly believe that a science is what the scientists at work make it: certainly new areas of computer science will be open to theory in the near future. Let us start small and grow: we are sure many of you will help to achieve this necessary growth up to the point where our Association will be a natural link between all European theoretical computer scientists". The first issue of the Bulletin also contained reports from Universities and research centers that help to understand what was the scientific atmosphere in Europe in those years: abstract computational complexity, Lindenmayer systems, grammatical inference, reproduction of automata, correctness of recursive programs, recursive and iterative program schemes, program semantics, combinatory logic and lambda-calculus.

Two more steps have contributed to establish the role of EATCS already in the years Seventies and Eighties of the last century: the creation by Maurice Nivat of the journal 'Theoretical Computer Science' in 1975 and the launch in 1981 of other important editorial initiatives: the 'EATCS Monographs on Theoretical Computer Science' and the 'EATCS Texts on Theoretical Computer Science'. All such initiatives were not autonomous but were based on the collaboration with commercial publishers (North Holland - Elsevier in the first case and Springer in the second and third case); what matters is that although started in the restricted EATCS circle they were directed to, and reached, the entire world community of theoreticians. Initially the project to start a journal was communicated by Maurice Nivat to the EATCS Council as an initiative involving the EATCS community. While the journal was not formally linked to the Association it had seven members of the EATCS Council in its Editorial Board and (as Maurice said in a letter

to EATCS members) the creation of the journal had been 'inspired' by the Association. Indeed, since volume 12, in 1980, to volume 80, in 1991, the front page of the journal carried the words: 'The journal of the EATCS'. But at beginning of the year Nineties the roads of the Association and of the journal started to diverge mostly because EATCS felt the need to adopt an open attitude towards all journals devoted to theory of computing.

As far as the EATCS Monographs and Texts book series are concerned, this might again be considered a success story in the life of the Association. When the initiatives started in 1983 the Editors of the series were Wilfried Brauer, Grzegorz Rozenberg and the EATCS President Arto Salomaa. Many of the first volumes rapidly became fundamental textbooks in the field, reaching a public much wider than the EATCS members and carrying the EATCS logo on the desk of students worldwide.

# The life of EATCS

In the paper Silver Jubilee of EATCS (1997) Ute and Wilfried Brauer say: "That EATCS members identify themselves with their association is mainly due to the ICALP series and to the Bulletin". Twentyfive years later we can undoubtedly confirm that ICALP and the Bulletin still are the pillars of the life of the Association but to them we should add several other initiatives that today make our Association so dynamic and vital.

I do not think it is worth now to enumerate all the developments that underwent along the life of the Association so let me just outline what I think are the most fundamental aspects that show why EATCS is 'well and alive' 50 years after its creation.

**ICALP.** The success of ICALP and its standing among the top world conferences in theory of computing is well known. Every year it is confirmed by about 500 papers submitted by excellent researchers, from 40-50 countries, mostly from Europe, America and Asia. The conservative selection rate (ranging from 28.2 and 29.8 in the last 10 years) is a guarantee of the quality of the conference and all years several good papers cannot be accepted due to the tough competition. Throughout the years EATCS has made an effort to update format and content of the conference in view of the scientific evolution of theoretical computer science. In the year 1997 the decision was taken to divide the conference in two tracks: Track A, Algorithms, Complexity and Games, and Track B, Automata, Logic, Semantics and Theory of Programming, somewhat corresponding to the two tracks

in which the journal Theoretical Computer Science had been split in 1991. The field was growing both in terms of number of papers and number of results published in the world (in particular the field of algorithms and complexity was exploding and attracting a growing number of researchers), but also, most important, in terms of subfields that needed to be addressed and understood and were getting the theoreticians involved. From the original subjects that dominated the scene in 1972 the years Eighties and Nineties saw a shifting interest toward new topics (just to make a few examples: approximation algorithms, on-line algorithms, dynamic data structures, parameterized complexity, algorithmic game theory, parallel and distributed systems, database theory, a variety of approaches to semantics of programs, program logics, etc.). Always with this spirit in mind in 2005 the program was split in three tracks by adding a Track C to the traditional two tracks A and B. The idea was that Track C might have been devoted, from time to time, to some hot topic that could not be completely hosted in the other two tracks. Since 2005 till 2008 Track C has been devoted to Foundations of Security and Cryptography. In subsequent years, since 2009 till 2019 Track C has been devoted to Foundations of Networked Computation: Models, Algorithms and Information Management. Other reasons that had great impact on the success of ICALP has been the periodic co-location with other top conferences (e.g. LICS) and the organization of satellite events, in some cases, at least at the beginning, intended to present results of research projects (e.g. ALGOSENSORS) in other cases devoted to emerging research topics (e.g. temporal graphs, real-time systems, quantum computational complexity, etc.). Finally it is important to remember that since 2016 the ICALP Proceedings, that previously were published by Springer in the ARCoSS subline of Lecture Notes in Computer Science, are published open access in the Leibniz International Proceedings in Informatics (LIPIcs) series in cooperation with Schloss Dagstuhl – Leibniz Center for Informatics. This is a very important contribution that not only provides a service to the international theory of computing community but also gives ICALP (and EATCS) worldwide visibility.

**Bulletin.** From the first two issues (edited by Maurice Nivat and by Giorgio Ausiello respectively) that were only twenty or thirty pages long, with the energetic role of the subsequent editors Hermann Maurer and Grzegorz Rozenberg the Bulletin became a fundamental vehicle of information for the community, reaching often the size of 400-500 pages full of informal notes, open problems, news from research centers, conference reports and especially the 'columns'. In the last thirty years the enrichment and updating of the Bulletin with new features (from abstracts of PhD theses, book reviews, and entertaining contributions, down to the most recent 'Interview', 'Viewpoint', 'Theory Blogs' Columns) has been constantly pursued. At the same time the most important step to strengthen the role of the Bulletin has been the decision taken by Luca Aceto (President) and Kazuo

Iwama (Bulletin Editor) about eight years ago to give open access to the Bulletin to the entire world theory community. This farsighted decision is again an important scientific service provided free of charge by EATCS. From this point of view it is paradigmatic the success of some Bulletin issues that have been downloaded 10.000 or even 17.000 times like issues 81 of 2003 and issue 84 of 2004.

**Awards.** Finally the Awards. EATCS members can be proud to contribute to an impressive series of prizes and recognitions with which the Association rewards excellence of research work of theoretical computer scientists from all around the world in a wide variety of fields. The first initiative of this kind has been taken jointly with the ACM Special Interest Group on Algorithms and Computation Theory (SIGACT) almost 30 years ago, in 1993, the Gödel Prize for 'outstanding papers in the area of theoretical computer science' (in particular "recent' results that have not appeared more than 13 years before the year of the award). The Prize is presented alternately at ICALP and at STOC. In 2022 it will be delivered at ICALP in Paris and the Committee, chaired by Samson Abramsky, consists, as usual, of three members indicated by SIGACT and three indicated by EATCS. Until now 77 scientists have received the **Gödel Prize** for the relevance and excellence of their papers. Taking into consideration the need to broaden the fields of theoretical computer science that deserved a recognition for relevant theoretical results, since the year 2000 EATCS decided to collaborate again with ACM to reward with the **Dijkstra Prize** outstanding papers on principles of distributed computing, 'with evident significance and impact on the theory and/or practice of distributed computing'. The Prize, sponsored jointly by the ACM Symposium on Principles of Distributed Computing (PODC) and the EATCS Symposium on Distributed Computing (DISC) is presented alternately at each of the two conferences. Until now 53 scientists have received the prize, sometimes repeatedly (Leslie Lamport has been awarded three times with this prize). For the same reason in 2015 EATCS and the ACM Special Interest Group for Logic and Computation (SIGLOG) established an annual award, called the **Alonzo Church Award** for 'outstanding contributions to logic and computation', in collaboration with the European Association for Computer Science Logic (EACSL), and the Kurt Gödel Society (KGS). In this case the contribution is required to have established evidence of lasting impact and depth over a time span of 25 years. To a more focused, but not less important, research field EATCS has decided to devote the **IPEC Nerode Prize** 'for outstanding papers in the area of multivariate algorithmics'. Since 2013 the prize is presented annually at IPEC (International Symposium on Parameterized and Exact Computation) and until now it has been awarded to 35 scientists. Beside all the prizes that we have introduced until now, that as we saw are meant to reward specific papers and specific results achieved in various domains, we have now to mention, of course, what we might call the flagship of

the EATCS award initiatives, the **EATCS Distinguished Achievements Award** that was presented for the first time in the year 2000 and that is aimed at acknowledging 'extensive and widely recognized contributions to theoretical computer science over a life long scientific career'. The name of the award reflects that it represents the highest recognition that the EATCS community expresses with respect to outstanding figures whose vision, work, and scientific results have inspired and shaped European and worldwide theoretical computer science. Finally, since all the mentioned awards tend to recognize the work of mature researchers, another important decision was taken by EATCS in 2009: to create an award aimed at providing a recognition for the research work of young scientists: the **Presburger Award** 'for outstanding contributions in theoretical computer science, documented by a published paper or a series of published papers'. The name of the award refers to Mojzesz Presburger who accomplished his fundamental research work on decidability of the theory of addition as a student in 1929. Since 2010 till today the prize has been awarded to 14 young researchers. To conclude the list of these important contributions of EATCS to reward excellence of research work we have to mention the **Best Paper Awards** and the **Best Student Paper Awards** that are annually presented at conferences sponsored by EATCS (ICALP in primis, of course, but also ESA, ETAPS, MFCS etc.). As most scientific associations EATCS has also started, in 2014, the **EATCS Fellows Program** to recognize 'outstanding EATCS Members for their scientific achievements in the field of theoretical computer science and for their intellectual and organizational leadership within the EATCS community'. Until now the status of EATCS Fellow has been awarded to about 40 EATCS members.

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In conclusion we think that in order to celebrate EATCS 50th Anniversary the most important aspect to underline is how, during its life, thanks to the constant participation and contribution of its members, the Association has operated to promote the relevance of foundations of computer science, to support excellence of research work, and to disseminate scientific results to a very broad community of researchers. As we have noted, by means of a variety of initiatives EATCS has played and continues to play a fundamental role not only for European theoreticians but for the whole theoretical computer science world community.

Long life to EATCS!