



Dear EATCS Members,

It was a great pleasure to meet so many of you at ICALP 2026 at Royal Holloway, University of London. The 53rd edition of ICALP was a wonderful occasion, both scientifically and socially. I was particularly encouraged by the strong participation of young researchers and students, and very pleased to see such a good attendance at the EATCS General Assembly. This vibrant participation is, to me, a particularly encouraging sign of the strength and vitality of our community. On behalf of EATCS, I would like to warmly thank the Program Committee Chairs, Danupon Nanongkai, Sayan Bhattacharya, and Michael Benedikt, all the members of the Program Committee, the Organizing Committee Chair, Matthew Hague, and the entire local team for their outstanding work. They put together an impressive scientific program and created an environment in which participants could exchange ideas, establish new connections, and enjoy being part of our community.

The energy of our community is particularly important at a time when mathematics and theoretical computer science are undergoing rapid change. One question, in particular, is becoming increasingly relevant to all of us: how will mathematical and theoretical computer science research evolve in the age of AI? We are witnessing a profound change in the way mathematical knowledge can be explored. AI systems are becoming increasingly capable of assisting with formal reasoning, discovering patterns, generating conjectures, suggesting proof



strategies, and even tackling problems that have long been considered highly challenging. This opens up exciting new possibilities, but also raises fundamental questions about the future of our research. For decades, progress in theoretical computer science has often followed a familiar path: formulate a challenging question, develop the right concepts, discover an appropriate technique, and ultimately prove a theorem. AI may increasingly become part of every stage of this process. It may help us identify promising conjectures, explore enormous spaces of possibilities, uncover unexpected connections between seemingly unrelated areas, or suggest approaches that might be difficult for a human researcher to discover alone.

But this does not make the human role less important. I believe it's quite the opposite. The ability to generate a plausible proof or conjecture is not the same as understanding why it is true, why it matters, or where it fits within the conceptual structure of a field. Theoretical computer science is not simply a collection of statements that can be proved. It is a discipline built around concepts, abstractions, explanations, and the discovery of the right questions. This may lead us to a particularly interesting paradigm shift: perhaps the scarce resource of future theoretical research will not only be the ability to solve problems, but also the ability to formulate important problems and recognize meaningful solutions. AI could allow us to attack mathematical and TCS problems at a scale and speed that was previously impossible.



It could also change the relationship between theory and experimentation, making computational exploration an increasingly important component of theoretical discovery. Some problems that have resisted decades of human effort may eventually become more understandable with the assistance of AI. Others may turn out not to be the questions we should have been asking in the first place.

This is an opportunity for our community to think proactively about where research is heading. What kinds of problems should we formulate for an AI-assisted scientific world? What does it mean to understand a proof when its discovery involves AI? How should we evaluate and communicate results generated with substantial machine assistance? And, perhaps most importantly, which new theoretical questions will emerge from AI itself? These are not questions for computer scientists working on AI alone. They are questions for the entire theoretical computer science community. Complexity theory, algorithms, logic, formal methods, combinatorics, cryptography, semantics, verification, and many other areas may all be affected by this transformation. I believe EATCS has an important role to play in fostering this discussion. Our community has always been at its strongest when it has combined technical depth with a willingness to rethink its fundamental questions. The AI era gives us another opportunity to do exactly that.

Another important way in which we shape the future of our discipline is through recognition. New calls for nominations will soon open for several EATCS-sponsored



awards, including the EATCS Award, the Presburger Award, the EATCS Distinguished Dissertation Award, and the EATCS Fellows. EATCS is also proud to co-sponsor major international prizes such as the Gödel Prize, the Alonzo Church Award, and the Dijkstra Prize. I warmly encourage you to take a moment to nominate outstanding colleagues and researchers. Recognition is not only a celebration of individual achievement. It is also one of the ways in which a scientific community tells its own story. The people and ideas we choose to recognize help highlight the contributions that have shaped our field and, perhaps even more importantly, the directions in which we believe theoretical computer science should develop. In a period of significant change, this responsibility becomes particularly meaningful.

Finally, I would like to reiterate something that is particularly important to me as President of EATCS: my inbox is always open. Your comments, suggestions, ideas, and constructive criticism are very welcome and deeply valued. EATCS is a community-driven organization, and its strength ultimately depends on the engagement of its members. Whether you have an idea for a new activity, a suggestion for improving an existing one, or simply a thought about where our field should be heading, I would very much like to hear from you. Every suggestion will receive careful consideration.

The coming years will undoubtedly bring significant changes to theoretical computer science. I am convinced that our community is exceptionally well placed to contribute to shaping them, not simply by adapting to



new technologies, but by asking the deeper questions about knowledge, computation, reasoning, and discovery that have always been at the heart of our discipline.

I look forward to continuing this conversation with all of you.

With warm regards,

*Giuseppe F. Italiano
Luiss University, Rome
President of EATCS
president@eatcs.org*

October 2026