



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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ECCAI, the European Coordinating Committee for Artificial Intelligence, was established in July 1982 as a representative body for the European Artificial Intelligence community. Its aim is to promote the study, research and application of Artificial Intelligence in Europe. It currently comprises 28 national AI societies representing 28 different countries.

The following describes the activities of ECCAI since the 2010 General Assembly in Lisbon. The current board consists of the following members:

Grigoris Antoniou, Gerhard Brewka (chair), Patrick Doherty (vice-chair), Jérôme Lang, Ann Nowé (treasurer), Michael Wooldridge.

Financial situation and membership

Due to the successes of the recent ECAI conferences ECCAI is financially safe with assets of around 200K Euros. Even though the ECAI-10 participation was somewhat low compared to earlier years (570 participants), there still was a substantial surplus. This allowed us to keep membership fees stable.

After the admission of the Polish AI society called PSSI (PAIS in English) at the GA 2010 ECCAI currently has 28 member societies. A new AI society called ARIA (Romanian Association of AI) was founded this year in Romania. The application of ARIA to become a new ECCAI member will be handled during this GA.

The ECCAI board supports such activities and welcomes the foundation of new AI societies in further European countries.

ECCAI Travel Grant Program

Travel grants (400,00 Euros each) were offered to participants of ACAI-11 in Freiburg. The board received 29 applications. Since in 2010 only 16 of the 25 available grants were given to applicants, the board decided to increase the number of grants to 29 this year so that all applicants were able to benefit from the grant program.

I would like to thank Grigoris Antoniou for organizing the application process and for interacting with the applicants.

The board plans to stick to the usual number of 25 grants for ECAI-12 and ACAI-13.

ECCAI Dissertation Award

The dissertation award selection committee founded in 2008 continued its successful work. The committee is organized by Toby Walsh, the ECCAI board is represented in the committee by Patrick Doherty. Further committee members are Thomas Eiter, Sarit Kraus, Oliviero Stock and Luc de Raedt.

This year the committee received 10 excellent nominations (only 4 were received last year). The ECCAI Dissertation Award for the best thesis defended in 2009 went to Cristina Urdiales, now Malaga, for her thesis *Cognitive assistance for persons with disabilities* submitted to UPC Barcelona (supervisor: Ulises Cortés). Congratulations.

The thesis was presented in a special award session during IJCAI-11.

I wish to thank the members of the award committee for their excellent work.

ECCAI Fellows Program

The fellows selection committee was chaired by Michael Wooldridge and included as further members Hector Geffner, Georg Gottlob, Gerhard Lakemeyer and Daniele Nardi.

5 nominations were received out of which 4 were accepted as new fellows 2011. The new fellows are Jean-Gabriel Ganascia, France - Université Paris VI, Stan Matwin, Poland - Univ. Ottawa / Polish Academy of Science, Serafin Moral, Spain - University of Granada, Michele Sebag, France - Université Paris Sud.

Thanks to the fellows selection committee for its excellent work, and congratulations to the new fellows.

ECCAI Sponsored Conferences

Since 2009 ECCAI has established two types of sponsorship:

- *Regular sponsorship* includes publicity and announcements, but no financial support is provided. The ECCAI Board decides upon application by the organizers.
- *Special sponsorship* provides funding for an invited ECCAI speaker who must be member of an ECCAI society. Moreover, ECCAI funding for the speaker must be advertised adequately. ECCAI provides travel support of up to 1500 Euros. This scheme is proactive; the ECCAI Board chooses among world leading conferences on general AI or major AI subfields.

International conferences sponsored this year under the regular scheme are: RuleML-11 and PTAI-11. Special sponsorship was awarded to IJCAI (ECCAI invited speaker: Dame Wendy Hall).

ECAI Conferences and Proceedings

Preparations for ECAI-12 in Montpellier are going well. The conference, which is the 20th of its kind, will host several special celebrations: the Turing centenary and the 25th anniversary of AIComm. It is planned to celebrate the latter with a special issue on highlights of European AI. For the former it is planned to have some special event. Options range from artistic performances to invited talks. Details are still to be determined. Michael Wooldridge will coordinate the Turing events with the ECAI-12 chairs. IOS Press announced its willingness to provide some sponsorship for the events.

As regards the ECAI proceedings, the umbrella contract with IOS Press expired after ECAI-10. The board started negotiations with IOS Press, but also explored several other options including AAAI Press. The board's main goal was to make sure proceedings are made freely available online right from the start of the conference. After serious negotiations IOS Press came up with a convincing offer that led to a new formal agreement for 2012 and beyond. As part of the agreement IOS Press put all ECAI proceedings back until 2000 online. They can now be accessed via the ECCAI web pages.

The board plans to explore possibilities to get earlier proceedings online as well, working backwards in time.

ACAI-11

ACAI-11, the Summer School on Automated Planning and Scheduling, was organized by Michael Brenner, Malte Helmert, Bernhard Nebel and Gabi Röger in Freiburg, immediately preceding the ICAPS conference. The summer school took place at Schloss Reinach, a scenic hotel a few kilometres from the ICAPS conference site in Freiburg. ACAI students had free access to the ICAPS pre-conference programme (workshops and tutorials). The tight connection of the school with the leading international conference in the area of

planning was extremely successful and may serve as a new model for future ACAIs. ACAI-11 attracted over 60 students and consisted of 9 courses by world leading experts. Lecturers were Chris Beck, Blai Bonet, Carmel Domshlak, Peter Gorniak, Joerg Hoffmann, Subbarao Kambhampati, Emil Keyder and Silvia Richter, Julie Porteous, and Brian Williams.

Thanks to all organizers for making ACAI-11 an excellent event.

Bids to host ACAI-13 will be due in summer 2012.

ECCAI Bulletin

The Bulletin is published regularly four times a year, edited by Grigoris Antoniou. Many thanks to Grigoris for his efforts in this respect. I would like to mention again that due to the unavailability of a central member database, it is the responsibility of the national societies to forward the Bulletin to their members. We kindly ask the responsible persons to make sure the Bulletin is received by all members.

AI Communications

Maria Fox took over the position as Editor-in-Chief from Enrico Giunchiglia in January 2011. Since then several innovations have been made: a new home page, the use of the mstracker editorial system which seems to be working well; the introduction of, and call for, Tutorial and Position Papers; the appointment of editors for Tutorial Papers, Position Papers, and Thesis Summaries; the possibility of publishing electronic archives with the journal (e.g. tutorial slides, demos).

The impact factor of the journal has further increased and the journal seems to be doing well. Thanks to Maria and also to Enrico for the tremendous efforts they put into the journal.

IJCAI going annually

During an AI societies meeting at IJCAI-11, preceded by an IJCAI/ECCAI meeting (Nebel, Giunchiglia, Lang, Wooldridge, Brewka), the IJCAI representatives presented their plans to have an IJCAI every year from 2015 on (in the meantime these plans have been decided and officially announced). This obviously will have a strong impact on future ECAIs and in particular requires a close cooperation among IJCAI and ECCAI as it does not make sense to have an IJCAI and a separate ECAI in Europe within a single year. The IJCAI model foresees the following sequence of conference locations: North America, rest of world, Europe, rest of world, North America, rest of world, Europe, etc. Thus, every second ECAI will be a joint ECAI-IJCAI. The first time this happens will be in 2018.

ECCAI and IJCAI are planning to work out a formal agreement regulating the many issues that need to be resolved, ranging from appointment of chairs, site selection to budgetary issues.

Gerhard Brewka
ECCAI Chair