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# EURO XIV

Report of the Organizing Committee

Jerusalem, July 3-6 1995

## Introduction

Overall Euro XIV was a great success in every respect : the scientific program, the social program, the number of participants, the 20th anniversary party, and the organization of the conference. We received many enthusiastic letters stressing all of the above. In spite of the concern regarding security in Israel, Thank G-d , the events passed without any incidents. The situation in the region has significantly improved, in the past several years, as a result of the ongoing peace process.

I would like to thank Roman Slowinski for his devotion to the task of PC chair and to the members of the program committee and the organizing committee who dedicated many hours in meetings and took charge of various activities. I would also like to thank the session organizers for the tremendous effort they have put forth to solicit quality presentations. Additionally and above all, I would like to thank all EURO officers for supporting us along and mainly : Paulo Toth, Maurice Shutler, Costas Pappis, Jean Bovet, Marino Widmer, Dennis Bouyssou, Philippe Van Aulsebroeck, and Jacob Krarup.

Zilla Sinuany-Stern  
Chair Organizing Committee

## Organizing Committee

Chair: Zilla Sinuany-Stern; Ben Gurion University, Beer Sheva  
 Finance: Moshe Kress; CEMA, Haifa  
 Public Relations: Adir Pridor; Institute of Industrial Mathematics, Beer Sheva  
 Venue & Logistics: Dror Zukerman; Hebrew University, Jerusalem  
 Social Program: Jakob Zahavi; Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv  
                   Nili Schnapp; Technion, Haifa  
 Donations and Exhibitions: Ury Passy; Technion, Haifa  
 Accomodations: Gur Moshavrio; Hebrew University, Jerusalem  
 Chair EURO XIII: Valerie Belton; University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom  
 Euro VP: Costas Pappis; University of Piraeus, Piraeus, Greece  
 Chair PC: Roman Slowinski; Technical University of Poznan, Poznan, Poland

We acquired the professional services of Ortra Ltd., located in Tel Aviv. Ortra office served as the conference secretariat. Overall this arrangement resulted in a successful conference. Ortra handled the abstracts, the communication with the authors, all the publications of the conference, registration, on site organization, social programs, spouses programs and tours. The organizing committee met mostly in Ortra's office in Tel Aviv, a centrally located place for all OC

members. Additionally, the OC officers were in close contact with Ortra, sometimes several times a day. Communication included directing and supervising each major stage of the process, with the help of an assistant to the OC chair at Ben Gurion University.

In order to minimize costs, several activities were sponsored by the universities of some OC members in Israel. Some material was mailed through the universities, specifically Ben Gurion University and the Technion. Several OC meetings, in addition, were hosted by Tel Aviv University. We provided free email services to Ortra via Tel Aviv University especially for the Euro XIV conference. Lastly, typing of drafts and minutes took place at Ben Gurion University.

### Progress of the Meetings

- 6.92 Euro XIII Helsinki, Finland  
Zilla Sinuany-Stern presented the Israeli proposal and Euro Council decided to have Euro XIV in Israel.
- 4.93 Tel Aviv University, Israel, OC Meeting  
The conference site set for Givat Ram campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Possible dates June or September. Although Ortra Ltd. was instrumental in preparing original proposal, several other companies will be reviewed before arriving at a final decision. The budget was presented.
- 11.93 OC meeting in Tel Aviv  
Preparation of the "call for papers". Suggestions for the social program.  
The contract with Euro discussed.
- 1.94 OC meeting Tel Aviv  
Coordination with Euro and Ortra contract. Ortra will encounter risk and share the profits. Euro will receive 10,000 SF for the first fully paid 400 participants and 75 for each additionally fully paid participants.
- 14.6.94 OC meeting in Tel Aviv  
Preparing the updated budget and the report to Euro.
- 7.94 At Euro XIII in Glasgow: OC and PC chairs presented a report. Euro executive committee decided to provide additional 10,000 Franks to needy applicants, and an additional 10,000 Franks to reduce the fee in 25 SF per participant (expected no. of participants 400). The budget update was presented.
- 19.10.94 OC Meeting at Tel Aviv University  
Only 20 abstracts were submitted. Future plan of action: reduce the registration fee, postpone the submission deadline, approach colleagues to organize invited sessions, and to publicize in journals. ORSIS will partially subsidize it's members.
- 25.1.95 OC meeting at Ortra office



Since Euro decided to finance the party, the banquet is canceled. The fee reduction is \$60, we added a bus tour on Wednesday. The price per student is set at \$100, \$130 for early and late registration. The invitation program will be detailed (more pages) with less. The subsidy for applicants requesting financial aid will be equally distributed among the participants. Subsidy covers only the registration fee.

2.5.95 OC Meeting at Ortra office  
Change in the party site due to lack of availability. The details of the social program were presented. An updated budget was presented.

30.5.95 OC meeting in Herzlyia  
Preparation for the final program with the abstract. The auditorium at Hebrew University is not ready thus the plenary sessions have been transferred to the hotel hall at a higher cost. Several alternatives for the Euro party are discussed including the need for a video. A PR person gave some possibilities.

27.6.95 OC meeting in Jerusalem  
The OC visited the hotel, the museums, and the campus. The exhibitions and registration plenary and semiplenary will be in the hotel, the parallel session will be on campus. Bus shuttle will run between the hotel and the campus. The Euro 20th anniversary will be in the Israel Museum. The Shrine of the Book will be open for Euro. There will be a band and folk dancing group. The get together cocktail will be by the side pool of the Jerusalem Renaissance Hotel.

## Venue

The choice of the Givat Ram campus of the Hebrew University was necessary since the hotels could not accommodate 27 parallel sessions at a reasonable cost. However, the auditorium of the campus was in renovation thus we were forced to find an alternative site. The alternative option was to use the hotel hall. Due to problems with logistics, we decided to host all semiplenary and plenary sessions in the hotel. Each day one half the day was run in the hotel (either plenary or semiplenary session) and half a day in the university (the parallel sessions). These time changes in the final program caused some confusion despite the fact that both chairs (OC and PC) in the opening session announced that the preliminary program should be ignored. The hotel halls were air conditioned while the university only had fans which were purchased especially for the conference. The registration and exhibitions took place in the hotel. Bus shuttles traveled between the hotel and the campus despite the short distance (300 meters).

The weather was rather cool for the Israeli summer. We were prepared for worse weather as fans were available and cold water coolers were ordered especially for the conference. Moreover, there were special cleaning services in the classrooms and the restrooms to ensure that the place would remain clean. There were also posters distributed throughout the campus and the hotel

guiding the participants. Ortra's representatives were present in the classroom areas by the buses and the halls.

### Accommodations

The three hotels at the conference site had relatively low rates, there was no shortage of rooms. The many hotels and motels with a wide range of rates throughout Jerusalem accommodated all the participants. The very low rate for university dormitories which were available for Euro XIV were not fully occupied.

### Related International Meetings

Several international conferences and meetings took place in Israel before or after the Euro XIV and these activities increased the number of participants. There were several related international conferences that occurred in the previous week : stochastic optimization, (in Nahariya); Game Theory (in Jerusalem), Information systems (in Nahariya). It was worthwhile for some participants to combine a specialized conference in their field with a general conference like Euro XIV. Additional meetings were coordinated a day before and after Euro XIV: intelligent scheduling of robots and FMS (in Holon), Boolean Mini Symposium(in Jerusalem), and ESIGMA annual meeting ( in Jerusalem).

Additionally, several journals had their Editorial Board meetings in Jerusalem : computers and OR, EJOR, and JORS.

### Participants

The total number of paid participants was 642, in all categories, of which 576 were attendees , including 73 students, and 66 were accompanying persons. Our minimum expectation was 400 fully paid participants(200 in early registration and 200 in late registration). The actual figure was 478 paid attendees (406 in early registration and 97 in late registration). Evidently, some of the accompanying persons were regular participants, but it was impossible to control this situation. There were additional persons who attended without paying who were either regular or accompanying persons but again it was impossible to have complete control over these instances. Since some participants arrived late and some left early, catastrophic consequences were avoided.

Euro XIV was truly an international conference . About 40 countries were represented as listed below. Most of the participants were not local (563), with only 79 Israelis participating in the conference ( this is the average no. in ORSIS annual meetings).





fee. We also applied for several applicants for a traveling grant from US agencies ( for Russian scientists) but none were approved. Consequently those who could not fund their traveling expenses gave up the grant offered.

The Yugoslavian OR society sent us a request to pay the early registration on site. Thus we actually granted the \$70 difference. We received a list of participants that wanted a grant for such arrangements. Some came during the conference and asked for a full waiver of the registration. The president of their society was consulted as well as Euro Secretary Denis Bouyssou independently. We all recommended not to approve these requests.

The lists of the applicants and the grants actually given are listed in the appendix.

Since the Israeli participants had to pay VAT on the registration fee (17 %), we subsidized them aprtially to cover these expenses.

### The Social Program

The social program was sponsored by EURO, ORSIS, and the city of Jerusalem.

On Monday night a "Get Together" reception took place at the pool side of the Jerusalem Renaissance Hotel including drinks and light snacks with live background music.

On Tuesday the Mayor of Jerusalem invited all Euro XIV participants to the King David Tower for a reception in the courtyard of the Tower. The Mayor gave a short but lively welcome speech. The speech was followed by an audio visual show about the history of Jerusalem with the background of the Tower excavation all around the courtyard. Bus transportation to and from the Tower was provided with precise timing.

On Wednesday evening several guided tours by bus took place around Jerusalem and some buses to Tel Aviv & Jaffa.

### The 20th Anniversary of Euro

Euro fully sponsored the celebration of its 20th anniversary. Several activities highlighted this celebration:

- The Special Closing Plenary Session included a special presentation marking the 20th anniversary of Euro.
- Ties /Scarves were given to each participant after the closing session with the symbol of Euro and the number 20 (xx) on it.
- Cocktail Reception was held at the attached hall in Jerusalem Renaissance Hotel in honor of the 20th anniversary.
- The Grand Celebration Party took place an hour later at the Israel Museum. It started with a visit to the Shrine of the Book . Afterward and outdoor buffet dinner was served with



exquisite food. An unusual folk dance troupe presented a variety of dances. About 550 participants attended the party via advanced sign up occurred until the day before the celebration in order to minimize the cost of the party. This policy saved about \$5000 for Euro, which sponsored the event.

- The plenary sessions were videotaped and the past presidents were interviewed on video.
- All the printed materials and the conference bag indicated the 20th anniversary of Euro.

#### Pre and Post Tours

Ortra offered a variety of exciting tours:

- Galilee and Jerusalem
- Jordan and Jerusalem
- Jerusalem, Dead Sea, and the Galilee
- Masada, Dead Sea, and Ein Gedi
- Desert Trip

- 900	10.000
- <del>78</del> * 75	5850
- <del>400</del> * 25	10.000
- <del>78</del> * 50	3.900

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### Profit of the Conference

According to the contract with EURO, they were supposed to receive 10,000 SF for the first 400 fully paid participants and 75 SF for each additional fully paid participant. The number of fully paid participants was 478. A year ago EURO decided to sponsor a reduction of 25 SF per participant, thus Euro gave up the 10,000 SF for the first 400 participants and for each additional fully paid participant 50 SF in dollar terms according to the original exchange rate. In total, the profit of EURO from the conference is 3900 SF at the original rate.

### General Comments

1. Invited papers increase the number of submissions, however, it causes confusion sometimes double counting and double scheduling. There is a need to develop a good system of coordination between the session organizers and chairs of the OC and PC.
2. The requirement of the abstract submission fee along with early registration are a good combination for reducing no show rates. It might be beneficial to charge people who paid the abstract submission fee the early registration fee on site as a bonus incentive, providing that the abstract fee is part of the fee.
3. There were some couples who were both regular participants but one wanted to pay the accompanying persons fee. There should be a clear policy stated in the registration form in order to resolve this issue.
4. Scheduling streams of sessions on a specific subject is convenient for the participants and for the organizers. It gives the participants a feeling of being in a small conference within a big conference. Assigning streams on closely related topics is also beneficial for the participants.



5. Using professional services is necessary for a small society (like ORSIS), though there is a lot of coordination and control to assure their quality. It may be beneficial to have all Euro conferences coordinated through a central office in Europe, at least the programming portion with the abstract and collection of registration fees to avoid reinventing the wheel each year by another society. There was a large set up cost as well as a learning curve that resulted from starting fresh. The organizational part of the conference, however, : room, board, social programs, and tours can still be organized by the local national society.
6. Including all the events and meals in the registration fee is a sound policy if the total cost is reasonable.
7. A special event at the closing plenary session or after the conference may attract the participants to stay until the end.
8. The estimate of the male/ female ratio for determining the number of ties and scarves was extremely high, but in reality it was close to an even split, especially since accompanying persons were included. Many ties were leftover while there was a shortage of scarves for the women. The leftover ties were sent to the Euro office.