Minutes of ECCAI General Assembly (GA)

25th of April 1997, 15^{00} - 18^{20} at the Krystal Hotel, Prague

Assembly representatives present:

ACIA Enric Plaza
ADUIS Gennadij Ossipov as proxy
AEPIA Enric Plaza as proxy
AFIA Jean Paul Barthès
AI*IA Pietro Torasso
ARC Jean Paul Barthès as proxy
BAIA Zdravko Markov
BCS-SGES Chris Thornton as proxy
CSKI Olga Stepankova
DAIS Carl Gustaf Jansson as proxy
GI/KI Wolfgang Wahlster, Ulrich Furbach
LANO Vytautas Cyras as proxy
LIKS-AIS Vytautas Cyras
NAIS Bjornar Tessem
NJSZT Andras Markus
NVKI Walter Daelemans as proxy
ÖGAI Johannes Furnkranz
RAAI Gennadij Ossipov
SAIS Carl Gustaf Jansson
SGAICO Jan Burse
SLAIS Nada Lavrac, Ivan Bratko
SSAISB Chris Thornton
SSKI SAV Mária Postulková, Karol Dobrovodsky

20 countries and 23 Societies represented by 19 delegates, which means a total of 40 votes.

1. Opening

The Chairman welcomed all delegates and was pleased that such a large number of delegates attended this general assembly in a non-ECAI year. He noted that G. Ossipov was nominated as proxy for ADUIS, Jean Paul Barthès as proxy for ARC, Enric Plaza as proxy for AEPIA, C.G. Jansson for DAIS, V. Cyras for LANO, C. Thornton for BCS-SGES, and W. Daelemans for NVKI.

The Chairman apologized on behalf of the ECCAI Board for having chosen a date for this General Assembly that conflicts with religious holidays in two Member countries (Greece and Israel). The Board will try to avoid such conflicts in the future. The next GA will be held on Wednesday, August 26, 1998 in Brighton.

2. Minutes of the Last General Assembly

The minutes of the General Assembly held in Budapest, 14 August 1996 were distributed. Unfortunately, the preparation of these minutes had been delayed until recently. The secretary of the previous board had problems with missing notes for some of the items on the agenda, since he had to count votes in parallel to the ongoing session. The minutes have therefore been augmented based on the notes of the present Chairman. The items that were incompletely described were item 8, item 12 and item 13. The augmented minutes have already been approved by the current board. In the present version still two delegate names were missing: Roger Evans and José Cuena. With these two additions the last GA minutes were approved.

3. Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman presented the other members of the board and their different roles. Nada Lavrac is Vice Chair and handles the ECCAI travel awards, Carl Gustaf Jansson is Secretary and handles the minutes, Jean Paul Barthès is treasurer, Walter Daelemans is the member in charge of the statutes and handles EU contacts, Piero Torasso is ordinary member and handles ECAI publication issues.

The Chairman announced that:

a new ECCAI webserver is now operating at Saarbrücken. The new ECCAI Webserver available at http:// www.eccai.org was presented to the General Assembly.

an ECCAI Secretariat is established in Kaiserslautern. The full address is:

Sigrid Herzog
German Research Center
for Artificial Intelligence
DFKI GmbH
Erwin-Schrödinger-Straße / Geb. 57
Postfach 20 80
D-67608 Kaiserslautern
Germany
Voice: +49 631 205 3213/3214
Fax: +49 631 205 3210
Email: siherzog@eccai.org

The Chairman reported:

- an increased income for ECCAI due to a large surplus for ECAI-96

- that the board has been very cost efficient by merging board meetings with other business trips paid by third parties

- that a better service is now provided for ECCAI members including 11 benefits:

- reduced ECAI conference fee
- reduced fee for attending ACAI summer schools
- free address entry in the European AI directory (a new version is planned)

- 2 free copies of AI Communications journal
- free access to the new electronic journal ETAI
- free link to the new ECCAI Web server (which includes info on ECCAI activities, can be used to widely promote activities of ECCAI members and information on European AI societies - it has about 100 requests daily)
- participation in the new dissertation prize scheme (planned activity)
- participation in the new ECCAI fellow programme (planned activity)
- eligibility to ECCAI travel awards (for conferences/events sponsored by ECCAI)
- availability of ECCAI mailing lists for broadcasting information
- representing interests of AI research field and AI researchers in EU and other European bodies shaping the European research policy

- that the Irish and Belgium Societies do not exist anymore. Some new applications from Eastern countries are foreseen.

The Chairman presents also highlights from board meetings during the last half year:

- the establishment of ETAI (see separate item)

- a new form of AICom (see separate item)

- the status of negotiations with future publishers for ECAI proceedings

- the ACAI summer school proposed by Lithuania

Piero Torasso described the discussions with Wiley and Springer Verlag with respect to the future publication of ECAI proceedings. Wiley will print the proceedings for ECAI-98, if ECCAI insists. At least for ECAI-2000, ECCAI needs a new publisher. According to the current proposal from Springer, the proceedings could be published in the lecture notes series (LNAI). The board will also negotiate with Morgan Kaufman. No final decision was made. If the negotiations with a new publisher cannot be completed before autumn, ECCAI will use Wiley for ECAI-98.

4. Secretary's and Treasurer's Annual Report

Cash Variations from August 1996 to August 1997 (First 2 Tables)

ECCAI's bank account, as of April 1997 shows a balance of 58,992 ECU. This figure is subject to minor variations since two savings accounts are in non-ECU currencies (resp DM and £), and the working account is in BF. The exchange rates are subject to fluctuations.

ECCAI has received 19,775 ECU from the organizers of last ECAI'96 in Budapest. Expenses related to the functioning of the Board have been so far 2,500 ECU.

Forecast to the end of 1977

ECCAI will receive 7,891 ECU as a second payment from the ECAI'96 meeting. Expenses are budgeted as follows: 2,500 ECU for the General Assembly; 3,000 ECU for the two next Board meetings; 3,000 ECU for ACAI Grants; 8,000 ECU for IOS Press (AICom); for a total of

16,500 ECU. If, we assume an income of 8,000 ECU from the members in 1997 (a conservative figure), the total cash variation will be negative of 609 ECU.

In fact the total amount of grants for ACAI was overestimated and was brought down to 1,000 ECU. Thus the estimated cash variation should be positive of 1,391 ECU.

Loan to ECAI'98

Not accounted for in the cash variation is a loan to the Organizing Committee of ECAI'98 (Third Table).

Invested money		rate	Eqv ECU
DM	19 126	0,52	9 869
£	9 072	1,37	12 411
ECU	19 437	1	19 437
Received			
ECAI'96			19 775
TOTAL			**61 492**
Expenses			
Miscellaneous			26
BM #1			1 045
WEB set up			150
BM #2			1 279
TOTAL			**2 500**
BALANCE (Apr 97)			**58 992**

Table 1 Cash variation up to April 25, 1997

Forecasts			
To receive			
ECAI'96			7 891
National societies	contributions ??		8 000
TOTAL			**15 891**
To spend			
ACAI Grants			3 000
GA			2 500
BM #3			1 500
BM #4			1 500
IOS			8 000
TOTAL			**16 500**
BALANCE			**-609**

Table 2 Forecasts for cash variation from April 25, 1997 to December 31, 1997

Loans			
ECAI'98			5 000
TOTAL			**5 000**

Table 3 Loan to the Organizing Committee of ECAI'98

Annual Budget for 1998

The budget for 1998 is presented taking into account possible income from ECAI'98, and from members' fees.

Expenses are conservative. They include 3 Board meetings, the cost of a General Assembly, Travel Grants to ECAI, Web maintenance costs, the cost of continuing the IOS press arrangement, a cost for setting up a Dissertation Price, and the cost of setting up a fellow program. Secretariat is courtesy of DFKI.

The current 1998 budget shows a deficit of 11,000 ECU, but expenses will be cut so that a balanced budget is achieved in the end.

INCOME				
	ECAI'98	15 000		
	Fees	12 000		
	TOTAL	27 000		**27 000**
EXPENSES				
	Board Meetings (3)	5 000		
	General Assembly	3 000		
	Secretariat	0		
	Travel Grants	13 000		
	Web maintenance	2 000		
	AICom	8 000		
	Dissertation Price	5 000		
	Fellow Program	2 000		
	TOTAL	38 000		**38 000**
BALANCE				**-11 000**

Annual Budget for 1997

The budget for 1997 is shown below. It assumes some income from the members, estimated conservatively at 8,000 ECU. ACAI'97 has no financial impact (except for the travel grants).

The overall projected result is negative and of the order of 8,000 ECU.

INCOME				
	Members	8 000		
	TOTAL	8 000		**8 000**
EXPENSES				
	Board Meetings (1)	4 279		
	General Assembly	2 500		
	Secretariat	0		

	Travel Grants	1 000		
	Web set up	150		
	AICom	8 000		
	Miscellaneous	100		
	TOTAL	16 029		**16 029**
BALANCE				**-8 029**

The budget for 1997 was approved by the GA. There were no abstentions and none against. The budget for 1998 was approved. There were no abstentions and none against.

5. AICom : The new Editorial Board and Distribution Scheme

Georg Gottlob is the new editor of AICom, but unfortunately could not attend the GA. On behalf of Georg Gottlob, Peter Flach presented the new policy for AICom. The policy includes an ambition for high quality papers, a broad AI Scope and an Editorial Board of good quality with so far 27 members. The area editors (selected members of editorial board) will get more responsibility and more decision power, being in charge of the complete reviewing process of an individual submitted paper.

IOS plans to augment the international marketing of AICom. This includes negotiations with AAAI to distribute to all their members and inclusion of non European members in the editorial board such as Jon Doyle, Stuart Russel and Riichiro Mizoguchi. A good cooperation with ETAI is proposed by making Erik Sandewall liaison editor, having frequent references to ETAI and by publishing ETAI papers. ECCAI should have influence on the character of AICom by being guaranteed two representatives. Nada Lavrac is proposed as a member of the AICom editorial board, representing the ECCAI board. Elisabeth André is proposed as a member of the AICom editorial board, in charge of ECCAI news and news about ECCAI member societies.

The chairman gives the following information:

ECCAI will pay 2 ECU/member/year for 2 issues of AICom. The copies will be sent by bulkmail to each society. For 4000 members this means 8000 ECU altogether. 2 issues/year out of 4 will contain ECCAI material. The first issue is planned now. The 2nd and 4th issues are planned to be ECCAI special issues. 14 ECU is the price for all additional issues of a volume for individual subscribers. This is an offer by IOS press, not by ECCAI. 6 ECU is the reduced fee for all additional issues of a volume for ECCAI societies, if they subscribe for all their members.

Some attendees of GA critizised the bad communication about the negotiations with IOS and some confusion regarding the relation between membership fees and the cost for AICom. The Board stressed that the membership fees grant members all eleven benefits of ECCAI, of which AICom is only one.

The GA approved the board's proposal to have a contract with IOS (two ECCAI issues) for 1997. For further decisions about 1998 and the future of AICom the GA proposes an evaluation after one year.

6. ETAI: The Electronic Transactions on AI

ETAI is an innovative electronic journal proposed by Erik Sandewall. An extended abstract on ETAI was distributed. The Chairman presented the new electronic journal, since Erik Sandewall himself was not able to present the new ETAI journal at the GA. The Board is interested to support ETAI in several ways, but ETAI doesn't need financial support at present. Initial funding exists from various sources of the supporting organizations. According to the proposal, the organization should include a policy committee and a number of topic areas with area editors. With regard to the policy committee, Wolfgang Wahlster is already a member.

ETAI comprise specialized transactions in different fields. Four transactions are already established at present. The journal is based upon the existence of first publication archives (FPAs). Papers are submitted from archives to ETAI. Papers change status due to a stepwise reviewing process within ETAI. ETAI also comprise an Electronic Colloquium: an active electronic discussion associated with each transaction. An example exists for Reasoning and Change.

The GA welcomes ETAI enthusiastically as an important channel of scientific communication in Europe and thanks Erik Sandewall and his team for their initiative.

7. ACAI-97: the 7th Advanced Course on AI in Vilnius, Lithuania

A presentation was made by Vytautas Cyras. The summer school will take place on the 23-28 of June 1997 at Vilnius University. The current program was distributed. The summer school has been granted 5500 ECU from the Tempus project and 1200 ECU from national Lithuan funds. The deadline for applications is the 16th of May. The deadline for travel grants has passed.

The GA proposes a more active process for generating proposals for future summer schools.

8. ECAI-98: Progress Report

Medeni Fordham (Sussex) presented the status of the ECAI-98 preparations:

- The dates and site are 23-28 of August 1998 in the Brighton Centre

- The Brighton Centre is free, subsidized by the City of Brighton

- The fees are lower than for ECAI-96.

- The break even point is at 423 participants.

- The poster for ECAI-98 was presented.

- The progress report was distributed together with posters.

Judging from the preliminary budget it was observed that the costs for PC and invited speakers was rather high and should be lowered.

9. ECCAI travel grant program

Nada Lavrac described the travel award grants for 1997.

According to the board's decisions, two kinds of grants were given for ACAI-97

- type A: for Baltic participants who do not pay registration : 100 ECU and

- type B: for others: 400 ECU

Grants for 1000 ECU in total have been approved: One application for a

non ECCAI sponsored event was denied.

10. ECCAI Membership Fees for 1997 and 1998

The following membership fees were proposed for 1997.

1. - 3 ECU for societies in EU member countries and a few other countries in Western Europe

2. - 2 ECU for societies in associated EU member countries

3. - 0 for societies in countries not associated with EU.

The above definitions are not precise enough and the GA requested concrete lists for each category. The following tentative list was made. It has to be finally approved by each society.

ACIA 1	GI/KI 1
ADUIS 3	IAAI 2
AEPIA 1	LANO 2
AFCET 1	LIKS-AIS 2
AFIA 1	NAIS 1
AI*IA 1	NJSZT 2
APPIA 1	NVKI 1
ARC 1	ÖGAI 1
BAIA 2	RAAI 3
BCS-SGES 1	SAIS 1
CSKI 2	SGAICO 1
DAIS 1	SLAIS 2
EETN 1	SSAISB 1
FAIS 1	SSKI/SAV 2

After a lengthy discussion the GA voted on two issues:

- Should ECCAI have a membership fee?

- Should the membership fee for 1997 be according to the above proposal?
Given the total of 40 votes:

- the GA decides on having a membership fee: 34 votes in favor and 6 against

- the GA decides for a membership fee according to the above proposal, 30 in favor, 8 against and 2 void votes.

The conclusion was that the membership fees proposed for 1997 are accepted by the GA.

11. Budget for 1997/98

The budgets for 1997 and 1998 were approved during the discussion of agenda item 4.

12. ECAI 2000

The Chairman reported briefly about the ECAI-2000, which will take place in Berlin, August 20-25.

13. Proposals for ECAI 99

Was discussed under item 7.

14. Any other business

15. Closing

Last updated 1997-06-02.