Minutes of the 1999 ECCAI General Assembly

Date and venue:

Wednesday, August 4, 11:30 am to 2:30 pm.

Room 357, City Conference Centre, Stockholm, Sweden in connection with IJCAI-99.

Assembly representatives present:

Association	Name	Votes
ACIA	Carles Sierra	1
ADUIS		
AEPIA	Ramon P. Otero	1
AI*IA	Piero Torasso (2)+ Oliviero Stock	2
AFIA	Jean Paul Barthes	2
APPIA		
ARC		
BAIA		
BCS-SGES	Ian Walson	1
CSKI	Michal Pechoucek	2
DAIS	Brian Mayoh	2
EETN	Costantine D. Spyropoulos	2
FAIS	Pekka Ala-Siuru	2
GI/KI	Ulrich Furbach	2
IAAI	Ehud Gudes	2
LANO		
LIKS-AIS		
NAIS	Fred Johansen	2
NJSZT		
BNVKI	L.C. Verbrugge	2
ÖGAI	Silvia Miksch (2) + Werner Horn	2
RAAI		
SAIS	Patrick Doherty	2
SGAICO	Jan Burse	2
SLAIS	Costantine D. Spyropoulos (proxy)	2
SSAISB	Ian Gent	1
SSKI SAV		

16 countries (in total 24) and 18 Societies (in total 26) represented, which means 32 (in total 48) votes in votings.

Also present at the meeting were Wolfgang Wahlster, Carl Gustaf Jansson, Robert Milne, Sigrid Herzog and Mariella Janmaat.

1. Opening

The Chairman welcomed all delegates.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Last General Assembly

The minutes of the last General Assembly on Wednesday, August 26, 1998 during ECAI-98 at Brighton was approved
(http://www.eccai.org/admin/ga_minutes_1998.html).

3. Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman´s report is available in its entirety at http://www.eccai.org/admin/chairreport_1999.html.

This year ECCAI has introduced three new services for its Member societies: The ECCAI Fellows Program was started, the first ECCAI AI Dissertation Award was given and an ECCAI Intranet with the possibility of online access to an updated membership directory has been established. We had a most successful ACAI Course in Greece this year and the preparations for ECAI-2000 are well underway. ECCAI represents now more individual members than any other AI umbrella society world wide. The major ECCAI events, the ECAI conference series and the ACAI course series, are now ranked internationally as the most prestigious scientific AI forums in Europe. With our support of ETAI and AICom journals we serve the scientific knowledge management among AI researchers.

The chairman thanked the colleagues on the Board for their excellent work and team effort. The roles in the board are as follows: Silvia Miksch from Austria is Vice Chair and handles the ECCAI Dissertation Award, Carl Gustaf Jansson from Sweden is Secretary and handles the minutes, Jean Paul Barthès from France is our treasurer, Kris Van Marcke from Belgium is the member in charge of the statutes and handles EU contacts, Rob Milne from the UK is ordinary member and handles the ECCAI Travel Grants. Carl Gustaf Jansson, Jean Paul Barthès and the chairman are now serving on the Board for the second two-years term. This means that at the next General Assembly during ECAI-2000, three new officers have to be elected, since according to the ECCAI statutes the maximal time of office is 4 years. Nominations of candidates from the ECCAI member societies should be sent to the secretariat as soon as possible. Most of the boards work was done via telecooperation over the Internet. Since the last General Assembly, the board had two face-to-face meetings on the 25th of January 1999, and on the 2nd of August 1999.

The chairman thanked Sigrid Herzog and Renato Orsini for their excellent work and service for ECCAI. The ECCAI Secretariat is currently located at the German Research Center for AI (DFKI). Sigrid Herzog manages this secretariat as part of her job at DFKI. In addition, DFKI sponsored Renato Orsini as the Webmaster of the ECCAI webpages. This infrastructure supported the work of the ECCAI Board in many ways. The donation of DFKI helped to reduce the operational expenses of ECCAI drastically. The chairman also thanked DFKI for this support.

The ECCAI webpages have been recognized by international awards for useful information about AI activities and they are heavily used now as a point of reference. All ECCAI member societies are asked to use the ECCAI logo on their own webpages and to augment their letter heads with a note "Member of ECCAI". Please provide also a link to the ECCAI webpages, so that all members of your society can easily access the services provided by ECCAI. This year, ECCAI has provided various new services on the webpages.

All other parts of the chairman's report are covered by other items on the agenda.

4. Minute's Silence as a Commemoration of the late Prof. Jose Cuena, ECCAI Secretary 1992 - 1996

5. Secretary's and Treasurer's Annual Report

The General Assembly's decision to introduce a membership fee of 3 Euros per member on the 25th of April 1997 in Prague was a major milestone in the history of ECCAI. After three rounds of fee collection, we have now gained some experience and can revise and adapt the process a bit. It is very disappointing for the Board Members, who all invest a lot of time as volunteers to work for ECCAI, that some Member Societies have not paid the fees, although they use the ECCAI services (like travel awards, reduced conference fees, ECCAI Fellows and Dissertation program etc.).

The Board decided to introduce a new policy under which all ECCAI services are cut for the year $n+1$ for members of those societies who have not paid the fee till the end of the year n. If the fees are not paid for two consecutive years and no convincing reasons are given for this unsocial behavior, we will start the expulsion process according to Article 5 of the ECCAI statutes. There are many societies who still owe ECCAI the membership fee for 1999, but I am sure that ECCAI will receive the payment during the next weeks.

The fee collection process must be improved: There was e.g. a suggestion to establish a credit card account. We are open to such suggestions and will check their feasibility. ECCAI makes a small surplus for 1998. Even if the adoption of a new fee structure will generate less income we believe that ECCAI can continue its traditional activities and start new services.

6. Budget for 1999 and 2000 (J.-P. Barthes)

The budgets for 1999 and 2000 was presented by J.-P. Barthes and approved by the GA. Due to the conceived surplus of ECAI-2000, the budget for 2000 gives a considerable surplus taking into account also the decreased income due to the revised fee structure.

7. Report on ACAI-99 (C. Spyropoulos)

ECCAI has sponsored the very successful 8th Advanced Course on Artificial Intelligence (ACAI-99) this year (see: http://www.iit.demokritos.gr/skel/eetn/acai99/). Nearly 160 people have attended this course together with the colocated workshops on the Greek Island of Crete in Chania from July 5-16, 1999. This course on Machine Learning was based on tutorials by world-class experts of this fields, most of them being pioneers and founders of specific methods of machine learning. Although the financial result is preliminary, it will be a definitely very positive outcome with an expected surplus of about 6000 Euros, half of which will go to ECCAI. The publicity for this ACAI was excellent, including a beautiful poster and very informative webpages. It certainly was one of the most successful Advanced Courses ECCAI has organized so far. The GA thanks professor Spyropolous as the Chair of the organising committee for the great job he has done. He also was able to raise a lot of sponsorship for this event and was able to attract very eminent lecturers to come to Greece.

8. ECCAI travel grant program (R. Milne)

In 1999 the ECCAI travel grant program (http://www.eccai.org/travelaw.shtml) sponsored participation

in two main events: the ACAI-99 summer school and the IJCAI-99 conference. In both cases there were more strong submissions than could be funded. The choices were made on the basis of the case for support, the contribution of the applicant and a geographic spread. 10 grants on 400 ECU was granted for each of the above events.

9. AICom: Electronic Access Scheme (W. Wahlster)

The General Assembly had decided to stop the purchase and distribution of the printed version of AICom to cut costs. In many discussions with IOS Press, we negotiated a new contract based on electronic distribution. The contract has been signed after various revisions in May 1999. The essence of the contract says that ECCAI pays a fee of 3000 Euros for electronic access based on the individual access of ECCAI members. We can allow up to 3000 individuals to access AICom issues. If more members would like to access, we would have to pay an additional Euro per new user to IOS. A password generating algorithm will be distributed to each society, who has paid the ECCAI fee. The password will be valid for one year.

Georg Gottlob does an outstanding job in editing AICom and the GA thanks him for all his efforts. The quality of the journal has increased once again and it is now one of the leading general AI journals worldwide. There are special issues and very interesting survey papers, that should attract a lot of attention of our members. In contrast to ETAI, AICom is a traditional journal with the classical review policy made available also electronically. ETAI together with AICom provide an excellent service for the members of ECCAI.

10. New Publishing Agreement for ECAI with IOS Press (W. Wahlster, M. Janmaat)

ECCAI has now signed now a new contract with IOS Press for the Publication of the next three issues of the ECAI proceedings. The contract is financially very attractive and has lead to a significant cost reduction compared to previous contracts. For example, the price for 800 copies of one copy of the proceedings of 700 pages will be only 16 Euros. In addition, IOS invests much more in the marketing of AI books, proceedings and journals than our previous publisher. In addition, their attitude towards copyright issues is very flexible. Another good deal for the ECCAI member societies is that individual members of ECCAI societies get a 30% discount of the list price, if they want to buy the proceedings after the conference.

11. Status of ETAI: The Electronic Transactions on AI (W. Wahlster)

In 1997 ECCAI announced the creation of a new forum for exchange of scientific results, the Electronic Transactions on Artificial Intelligence (ETAI) (http://www.etaij.org/) . It is an Internet-based service which is available free of charge. The editor in chief of ETAI is Prof. Erik Sandewall, Linköping University, Sweden. ETAI has gained international recognition as a major driving force for innovative methods for scientific publication and scholarly discussion. For example, there was an article in the Nature Journal pointing out some of the radically new features of the ETAI publication process. In 1998, the agreement between the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (KVA), the European Coordinating Committee for Artificial Intelligence (ECCAI), and Linköping University (LiU) worked fine and increased the international reputation of the journal.

At this IJCAI, the second printed Volume of ETAI for 1998 was distributed. ETAI will be augmented by more areas and the submission rate is increasing. ECCAI urge all member societies to promote ETAI and to encourage their members to submit some of their best work to ETAI. With ETAI, Europe has the chance to become the leader in innovation of scientific publication in the Internet Age. The GA thanks Erik Sandewall for his excellent job and his enthusiasm for ETAI. Thanks go also to the area editors of ETAI, the Members of the Policy Board and last but not least to the authors, who submitted their work to this new medium.

12. ECAI-2000 in Berlin Progress Report (LAC: K. Sundermeyer and H.-D. Burkhard, PC: W. Horn)

The next major ECCAI event will be the ECAI-2000 conference (http://www.ecai2000.hu-berlin.de/) taking place at the Humboldt University in Berlin, August 20th - 25th year 2000. The progress was described by the Program Chair, Prof. Horn and the Local Arrangement Committee Co-Chairs Dr. Sundermeyer and Prof. Burkardt. The sponsorship for ECAI-2000 is strong and the cooperation between local organization and program committee is good. The Calls are published now in a very nice brochure, which was distributed at the ECCAI booth at IJCAI-99. In addition, there is a poster, which all representatives are encouraged to distribute in their societies. The webpages contain all the relevant details and have a very nice design. In particular ECCAI is pleased to announce that ECAI-2000 will contain a special sub-conference called "Prestigious Applications of Intelligent Systems (PAIS-2000)" chaired by Robert Milne. Deadline for paper summaries to ECAI-2000 is the 2nd of February 2000.

13. ACAI-2001: Draft Proposals

Draft proposals for the ACAI (http://www.eccai.org/acai.shtml) in 2001 are requested. Please send proposals to the ECCAI secretariat.

14. ECAI-2002 in Lyon: Status Report

The planning of ECAI-2002 is well on its way. Two key issues at present is the establishment of appropriate sponsorship and inexpensive lodging for students.

15. The ECCAI Dissertation Award 1998 and 1999 (S. Miksch)

On the 3rd of August 1999 the first ECCAI Dissertation Award (http://www.eccai.org/diss-award/1998.shtml) for 1998 was given to Paolo Liberatore from Universita di Roma La Sapienza for his outstanding dissertation "Compilation of Tractable Problems and Its Application to Artificial Intelligence". He received a certificate and an award of 1500 Euros. At a small Awards Ceremony, the winner of the ECCAI Dissertation Award gave a short summary of the results of his doctoral dissertation.. The GA thanks IJCAII for having announced this event in their program this year. In addition, many thanks go to our reviewers for this first round and in particular to Silvia Miksch for managing this new ECCAI service.

Nominations are invited for the 1999 ECCAI AI Dissertation now with a deadline for submissions as of 1st of December 1999. The next Award will be presented during ECAI-2000 in Berlin. Eligible doctoral dissertations are those defended after 1st of January 1999 in the general area of Artificial Intelligence. The author must be a personal member of an ECCAI member society and the dissertation must have been defended at a European university.

16. The ECCAI Fellows Programme (W. Wahlster)

The ECCAI Fellows program (http://www.eccai.org/fellow.php) recognizes individuals who have made significant and sustained contributions to the field of AI in Europe. Fellows' accomplishments range from pioneering advances in the theory of AI, to unusual accomplishments in AI technology and applications. Usually only individuals who have made contributions to AI for a decade or more after receiving their doctoral degree (or are at an equivalent career stage) will be selected. Leadership in ECCAI or ECCAI

member societies, support of forums for the exchange of ideas, and extended service for the international AI community also play a role in the selection process. It is not a prerequisite that the nominee is born in Europe or has a European citizenship.

27 individuals have been elected in the first round by the Board (http://www.eccai.org/fellow.php?sort=year). In order to bootstrap the process the ECCAI Board has decided to use mainly three operational criteria, which are not necessarily disjoint. All former ECAI Program Chairs (starting in 1982), all former ECCAI Chairs, and all European AAAI Fellows have been considered.

The ECCAI member societies or individual members of these societies are invited to nominate individuals whom they consider to have achieved unusual distinction in the field. These nominations are then considered by the ECCAI Fellows Selection Committee, comprising 6 ECCAI Fellows and the ECCAI Chair. The policies governing the operation of the Fellows Committee are under the review of the ECCAI Board.

Each ECCAI fellow receives a certificate and is invited to the Fellows Breakfast. On the 4th of August 1999 we had the first ECCAI Fellows Breakfast. At the first Fellows meeting is was decided to form discussion groups about the future relation between AAAI and ECCAI, about issues in the methodology of AI and the future focus of activities by the ECCAI fellows. The next Fellows Breakfast will be held during ECAI-2000 in Berlin.

17. ECCAI Membership Fees for 2000

A new scheme for ECCAI Membership Fees was proposed. The main reason for the new structure is to eliminate undesirable consequences for Member Societies with very high number of individual members.

The proposal after some discussion and modifications was that societies should pay according to the following table:

for 0- 300 # of members	3 Euros (300=>900 Euros)
for 300-360 # of members	3 Euros (360=>900 Euros)
for 360-1000 # of members	2.5 Euro (361=>902.5 Euros,1000 =>2500 Euros)
for 1000-1250 # of members	2.5 Euros (1250=>2500 Euros)
for 1250 - …. # of members	2 Euros (1251=>2502 Euros)

The cost for ECAI to adopt the new scheme relative to the current one with 3 ECU/Member Society is roughly 2500 ECU, given the present number of individual members in each Society.

The general assembly decided to adopt the new membership fee scheme by an open voting with no negative votes and two abstentions.

18. Membership Status of Societies

The Dutch and Belgian societies have joined and formed a new society with the name BNVKI.

The French society ARC has ceased to exist.

19. The European AI Directory

Under this item was discussed both the ECCAI Intranet and European AI Directory. One very important

new service accesible from the ECCAI webpages (http://www.eccai.org/) is the ECCAI Intranet, which is password protected, so that it is only accessible for the ECCAI Board and the current Officers of ECCAI Member Societies. They can find there important documents, which should not be made available to the public but only to the members of the General Assembly. This Intranet service provides e.g. access to the new contracts with IOS Press concerning the ECAI proceedings and the electronic access to AICom. In addition, a Java Servlet provides an interactive and online search capability for the ECCAI European AI Directory. With this service a large Excel spreadsheet can be searched, which contains a revised and updated version of the printed Membership Directory.

20. Date for the Next General Assembly at ECAI-2000 in Berlin

The date and time for next General Assembly at ECAI-2000 in Berlin was decided to be Wednesday the 23rd of August at lunchtime.

21. Any other business

22. Closing

Questions about the minutes should be directed to Carl Gustaf Jansson (calle@dsv.su.se) or Sigrid Herzog (siherzog@eccai.org).