

**Formal Methods Europe  
Minutes of the 35<sup>th</sup> meeting  
held in Ghent, Belgium (Annual General Meeting)  
Friday 27 November 2003**

Present at the meeting were:

- Raymond Boute (Ghent University)
- Judith Carlton (Escher Technologies Ltd.)
- David Crocker (Escher Technologies Ltd.)
- Alessandro Fantechi (University di Firenze)
- John Fitzgerald (University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Chairman)
- Dino Mandrioli (Politecnico di Milano)
- Tiziana Margaria (University of Dortmund)
- Nico Plat (West Consulting B.V., Secretary)
- Kees Pronk (Delft University of Technology, Treasurer)
- Marcel Verhoef (Chess Information Technology B.V.)
- Hannes Verlinde (Ghent University)

Apologies had been received from: Derek Andrews, Juan Bicarregui, Robin Bloomfield, Eerke Boiten, Jonathan Bowen, Tim Denvir, Dines Bjørner, Stefania Gnesi, Antony Hall, Neil Henderson, Randolph Johnson, Peter Gorm Larsen, Yves Ledru, Simão Melo de Sousa, Dominique Mery, Markus Montigel, Paul Mukherjee, José Oliveira, Jan Storbak Pedersen, Stephen Paynter.

**1 Welcome**

John Fitzgerald welcomed all those present at the meeting. He thanked Raymond Boute for organising and hosting the meeting.

**2 Agree upon agenda**

The agenda distributed at the meeting was agreed upon.

**3 Minutes of the meeting held in Braga on 22 May 2003 and in Pisa on 11 and September 2003**

The minutes of both meetings were approved. One modification was made: the name of Judith Carlton was misspelled in the minutes of the Pisa meeting (was: Judith Collan).

**4 Action list**

Action 28/5: Done. Action closed.

*Action 35/1: John Fitzgerald to send the latest version of the Symposium Guide to Nico Plat*

*Action 35/2: Nico Plat to make the Symposium Guide available on the web site.*

Action 30/15: Done, Nico Plat is doing this himself.

Action 32/1: Done. Action closed.

Action 32/6: Closed.

Action 32/13: Done. The invited lecture of Jean-Raymond Abrial was financed.

Action 33/1: Done. Action closed.

*Action 35/3: Stefania Gnesi to send the results of the questionnaire to John Fitzgerald.*

Action 33/2: Done. Action closed.

Action 33/3: Done. Action closed.

Action 33/4: Done. Action closed.

Action 33/5: Done. Action closed.

Action 33/6: Done. Action closed.

Action 33/7: Done. Action closed.  
Action 34/1: Done. Action closed.  
Action 34/2: Action closed.  
Action 34/3: Done. Action closed.  
Action 34/4: Done. Action closed.  
Action 34/5: Done. Action closed.  
Action 34/6: Done. Action closed.  
Action 34/7: No progress.  
Action 34/8: Done. Action closed.  
Action 34/9: Done. There is no case for a dedicated FME newsletter at the moment. Action closed.

## **5 Financial report regarding the period 1 January 2002 – 31 December 2002**

Kees Pronk suggested that the AGM be moved to the beginning of the year in order to bring financial reporting and planning into synchronisation with policy reporting and planning. This proposal was accepted. As a consequence, the next FME meeting in April 2004 will also be an AGM.

Kees also clarified the financial report over 2003. Current low interest rates mean that the society is increasingly dependent on its income from symposia. Although reserves are at a satisfactory level, there is some concern that expenditure may begin to exceed income.

Kees is also investigating whether or not to open a Dutch bank account, replacing the current Belgian one, for practical reasons. However, the decision about which bank to go ahead with depends on possible tax consequences. Kees will therefore seek discuss the matter with a (Dutch) tax advisor.

*Action 35/4: Kees Pronk to discuss the establishment of a Dutch bank account with a tax advisor.*

John thanked Kees for all his work as FME's Treasurer during the period discussed.

## **6 Report by the Audit Committee**

The members of the audit committee (Marcel Verhoef and Markus Montigel) had individually checked the FME accounts and found no irregularities. Marcel Verhoef reported at the meeting. The meeting discharged Treasurer Kees Pronk from his responsibilities during this period. John thanked the audit committee for their work. David Crocker volunteered to serve as member of next year's Audit Committee and this was approved *nem. con.* Markus Montigel will also be asked to serve as member of next year's Audit Committee.

*Action 35/5: John Fitzgerald to ask Markus Montigel as a member of next year's audit committee.*

## **7 Account of activities during the past period**

Nico Plat clarified the activity report over the past period (enclosed with the minutes). The members present accepted the report. John thanked all active FME members for their work.

## **8 Board member election**

In accordance with Article 10.5 of the FME Statutes, John Fitzgerald stepped down as Chairman of FME. There were no other candidates to take his position and John was re-elected *nem. con.*

## **9 Composition of the FME Board**

The Board proposed to expand its membership by two persons: one with responsibility for the continuity and development of the FME Symposia, and one with responsibility for dissemination of information about FME and its activities, including maintenance of the content of

the new web site. John Fitzgerald had already approached a candidate for the dissemination post, but no response had yet been received. Stefania Gnesi had stepped forward as a candidate for the FME Symposia post. Because the Board, according to the statutes, must consist of an odd number of people, it was not possible to formally elect Stefania as a Board member at the meeting. It was proposed to do this at the next meeting when a candidate Board member for Dissemination can be elected as well. In the mean time though, Stefania can start her activities.

*Action 35/6: John Fitzgerald to continue to seek a candidate Board member for Publicity.*

In the longer run, the Board intends to nominate two more Board members: one for educational issues and one for industrial issues.

## **10 Plans for the coming period**

John Fitzgerald presented the policy plan for 2003 and Kees Pronk presented the budget proposals for 2003 and 2004 (enclosed with the minutes). The AGM accepted both.

## **11 Report on FM'03**

Dino Mandrioli briefly summarised the events at FM'03. Most facts about FM'03 had already been brought forward at the previous meeting in Pisa. He thanked Tiziana Margaria who will edit a special issue of Software Tools for Technology Transfer with selected papers from the Symposium. Dino felt that the only downside of the Symposium was that, in his opinion, it failed to sufficiently attract FM sceptics.

Financially the Symposium was also a success, although the surplus (definite numbers were not yet available) was not as high as might have been expected. More money than budgeted was spent on extra social events, such as guided tours and a special dinner for those who had contributed to the Symposium.

John Fitzgerald congratulated the organisers again on the success of the Symposium.

## **12 Status report on FM'05 and FM'06**

Based on advice from Nico Plat, who had analysed two competing offers from McMaster University in Canada and from Newcastle University in the UK, the board had decided to accept the offer from Newcastle University to organise and host FM'05.

John Fitzgerald, General Chair for FM'05, reported on the status. Organisation is well underway and the entire OC has been formed. John has also approached two candidate PC Chairs. Relevant details can be found in the proposal that Newcastle University submitted earlier and on the Symposium website.

Several options for the conference dinner were discussed. Most members present were in favour of having this dinner at Durham Castle, a half an hour's bus drive away from the city centre.

With respect to FM'06, consideration is being given to holding the event "outside Europe". An important contender for organising FM'06 is McMaster University in Canada. Stefania Gnesi, future board member (see item 9) with a special responsibility for organising FME's Symposia, will be asked to start working on this.

*Action 35/7: John Fitzgerald to ask Stefania Gnesi to initialise the organisation of FM'06.*

The Symposium held after FM'06 could then be organised in Europe again, e.g. in Braga, Portugal. Other options include holding the symposium in Asia, following the proposal from Shanghai.

### **13 Symposium on Teaching Formal Methods**

Raymond Boute reported on the status of the "Symposium on Teaching Formal Methods", to be held in 2004. The last two weeks there had been little progress; there is no budget yet and there is still some disagreement on the exact date of the Symposium: Raymond favours August 2004 but Dines Bjørner thought that this would be too soon, given the time needed for preparation. If the OC wants to claim funding from CologNet, however, then the Symposium must be held in the year 2004. It was decided to set a date at the beginning of December 2004.

Neville Dean has been approached for the position of PC Chair. If Raymond approaches a second PC Chair from Belgium he will probably also get funding from the Belgian government.

The proceedings of the Symposium will be published, if possible, by Springer Verlag.

### **14 FMnet Network of Excellence Proposal**

Jonathan Bowen had reported on the status of the FMnet Network of Excellence Proposal in writing prior to the meeting. The proposal has been submitted under the 2nd Call (FP6-2003-IST-2) theme Open development platforms for software and services (IST-2002-2.3.2.3) on 15 October 2003. Specifically it is considering formal methods open tools development and interoperability (e.g. using XML and the Semantic Web). Receipt of the proposal has been acknowledged by the Commission, but there is no further feedback as yet. More information is available at <http://www.fmnet.info>. John congratulated Jonathan on the preparation and submission of the proposal.

### **15 FME policies**

In its operation FME uses a number of policies (e.g. for travel reimbursements, sponsoring events, the use of its mailing lists, etc.), some of which are explicit (but perhaps not always clear or known by the members) and some implicit. Nico Plat proposed to write down all policies in one single document and discuss this document in a subsequent meeting.

*Action 35/8: Nico Plat to write document on FME policies.*

### **16 FME subgroups**

All the current subgroups, with the exception of the subgroup on Education, have shown little to none activity in the past years. It was therefore decided to propose to each of the subgroups (again with the exception of the subgroup on Education) to discontinue their existence.

*Action 35/9: John Fitzgerald to propose to the FME members to discontinue the current subgroups, with the exception of the subgroup on Education (and of course: ForTIA; see item 17).*

### **17 ForTIA**

Marcel commented on the written report he had sent prior to the meeting (enclosed with the minutes).

ForTIA is welcome to become a proper FME subgroup in 2004, as long as all ForTIA members are also (or will become) members of FME. Second requirement is that ForTIA does not undertake any actions that have major implications without the board's approval. The situation should be evaluated on a year-by-year basis.

The budget requested by ForTIA was considered too large for FME to carry; however the members present realized that FME has a responsibility as a "founding parent" to provide some support during the start-up period. The following offer was made to ForTIA: if and when ForTIA becomes a subgroup of FME, a budget of EUR 1000 will be earmarked for ForTIA activities in 2004. The ForTIA treasurer can submit concrete proposals to the FME board to request money from that earmarked budget. In general expenses (such as travel) just for the sake of keeping the

ForTIA organisation in the air will not be granted. However, if an activity is organized as ForTIA where a board member gives for example a presentation (and there is a board meeting before or after) then a financial incentive (covering part of the expenses) is certainly possible.

On the issue of having another I-Day at FM'05 the discussion was less consistent; although I-Day was originally intended as a one-off activity both in Copenhagen and Pisa, it was recognized that there is certainly a case for another I-Day, e.g. as a means for generating future ForTIA funds (just like FME does). The AGM discussed several options on how-to implement an I-Day at FM(E)'05 but this discussion was inconclusive. However, the general feeling was that the industrial angle should and will definitely be continued in future FME symposia and the program committee would certainly welcome and consider any proposal coming from ForTIA (Juan Bicarregui of Rutherford-Appleton Laboratories (UK) is the responsible workshop Chair).

#### **18 FME website**

Since the last meeting, Jonathan Bowen had analyzed and compared the CMS offers made by Delft University of Technology and West Consulting, and he had advised John Fitzgerald to select the offer made by West Consulting. Formalities with respect to the work to be carried out by West will soon be finalized, after which work on the CMS templates can begin. This should then be finished by 1 February 2004, and by 1 April 2004 the new website should be "live" and filled with new, up-to-date content.

#### **19 Date and place of next meetings**

The next meeting will be organised on Sunday 4 April in Canterbury, Kent, UK. This meeting will also be the 2004 AGM.

The meeting after that will be held on Monday 6 September 2004 in Newcastle, UK.

#### **20 Other Business**

Tiziana Margaria attended the members on the newly founded ISOLA conference, which she organizes in close collaboration with EASST (European Association on Software and Systems Technology, see [www.easst.org](http://www.easst.org)). EASTT has its origin in the well-known ETAPS conference series. The first ISOLA conference is planned for 30 October - 1 November 2004 at Nicosia, Cyprus. Tiziana seeks FME support for this conference

*Action 35/10: Tiziana Margaria to distribute her presentation on ISOLA to the FME members.*

*Action 35/11: John Fitzgerald to send rules for FME sponsorship to Tiziana Margaria.*

Nico Plat reported that, together with a few colleagues, he is starting up an open source project with the aim to develop a formal methods toolset. Since the project had not been officially launched yet he could not give any details. He did ask for a little bit of financial support from FME to pay for the domain name of the project website and he asked the members present of (other) ways initiatives such as these could be supported by FME.

## **Summary of actions**

Action 34/7: José Oliveira to submit a report on the status of the Education Subgroup

Action 35/1: John Fitzgerald to send the latest version of the Symposium Guide to Nico Plat

Action 35/2: Nico Plat to make the Symposium Guide available on the web site

Action 35/3: Stefania Gnesi to send the results of the questionnaire to John Fitzgerald

Action 35/4: Kees Pronk to discuss the establishment of a Dutch bank account with a tax advisor

Action 35/5: John Fitzgerald to ask Markus Montigel as a member of next year's audit committee

Action 35/6: John Fitzgerald to approach a candidate Board member for Publicity

Action 35/7: John Fitzgerald to ask Stefania Gnesi to initialise the organisation of FM'06

Action 35/8: Nico Plat to write document on FME policies

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