

**Formal Methods Europe
Minutes of the 38th meeting
Held in Ghent, Belgium
Friday 19 November 2004**

Present at the meeting were:

- Raymond Boute
- Neville Dean
- Steve Dunne
- John Fitzgerald (Chairman)
- Valerie Harvey
- Franz Lichtenberger
- Dino Mandrioli
- José Oliveira
- Nico Plat (Secretary)
- Kees Pronk (Treasurer)
- Ken Robinson
- Simão Melo de Sousa
- Marcel Verhoef

Apologies had been received from: Eerke Boiten, Jonathan Bowen, Ana Cavalcante, Tim Denvir, Alessandro Fantechi, Stefania Gnesi, Shmuel Katz, Steve King, Jan Tretmans, Teemu Tynjala, Jim Woodcock.

1 Welcome

John Fitzgerald welcomed all those present at the meeting. He thanked Raymond Boute for his work organising the meeting. He briefly introduced FME and its aims for those normally not present at an FME meeting.

2 Agree upon agenda

Item 5 (FME logo) was deleted. A report on ISOLA by Marcel Verhoef was added to the agenda.

3 Minutes of the meeting held in Newcastle upon Tyne on 6 September 2004

The minutes of the meeting were approved without modification.

4 Action list

Action 34/7: Done, see item 10 of these minutes. Action closed.

Action 37/1: Done. The paper is now available at www.fmeurope.org under the "Formal methods" -> "Education" section. Action closed.

Action 37/2: Done but no response received as yet. Action closed.

Action 37/3: Done, action closed. Jonathan Bowen had reported by e-mail that that there is no real progress and that he is very busy with other commitments at the moment. If a good EC call presents itself that would be motivational. Jonathan would prefer, however, that someone else would take a more leading role in reviving it, with Jonathan as a backup. John Fitzgerald proposed to rediscuss FMnet at a future meeting

Action 38/1: John Fitzgerald to initiate rediscussion of FMnet at a future meeting.

Action 37/4: Done, action closed. John Fitzgerald had sent out an enquiry but had not yet received many results. So far just a few members had expressed interest in a reduced subscription fee for FACJ through FME. A closer collaboration between FME and FACJ had been discussed between John and Cliff Jones, who had suggested that perhaps FME could encourage individuals to submit "more practical" contributions to FACJ. Cliff Jones will send out a message to FME members on this subject.

Action 38/2: Cliff Jones to send a message to FME members on contributions for FACJ.

No matter how the issue of reduced subscription fees to resolves, FME members can still apply for the reduced fee by becoming a member of BCS FACS first. In general it was felt that a prominent link to the BCS FACS web site should be present on the FME web site.

Action 38/3: Nico Plat to add a link to the BCS FACS web site on the FME web site.

Action 38/4: John Fitzgerald to write introductory text to accompany the link to the BCS FACS web site.

Marcel Verhoef suggested that the best papers of each FME Symposium could be published in a special issue of FACJ or another relevant journal (e.g. STT Journal).

Action 37/5: Done, action closed.

Action 37/6: Not done because of recent developments, see item 9 of these minutes. Action closed.

Action 37/7: Done, see item 10 of these minutes. Action closed.

Action 37/8: Done, action closed.

Action 37/9: Done. Bernhard Aichernig had sent a reply (enclosed with these minutes). His reply consisted of two parts: a proposal for a "core" FME web site and a Wiki-like part. Wiki was regarded by most present at the meeting as a favourable and positive option. Jose remarked that in his experience this worked really well, especially for textual representations.

Action 38/5: John Fitzgerald to pass the comments on the web site plan on to Bernhard Aichernig.

Action 37/10: Done, action closed.

Action 37/11: Done, action closed. It was decided that the board would choose the final version of the logo, to be used for Symposium posters, the web site, letter head, etc.

Action 38/6: FME Board to decide on the final version of the new FME logo.

5 Status report on FM'05

John Fitzgerald reported on the progress of FM'05. Progress with the organisation is going very well, details can be found in the report accompanying these minutes. Many confirmed proposals for workshops and tutorials had been received and already a few sponsors had been found. A very early registration date is being considered (even before the program is known) to make sure that attendees can get the best hotel rates (which are quite high in Newcastle upon Tyne).

6 Status report on FM'06

Stefania Gnesi had forwarded a message by Emil Sekerinski (enclosed with these minutes) on the progress of FM'06. PC Chairs for FM'06 are currently being sought. Emil Sekerinski will give a presentation on FM'06 and its venue at the FME AGM in April 2005.

It was decided that the board would not follow its normal custom of meeting at the intended symposium venue because of cost.

7 Report on the Symposium on Teaching Formal Methods

Raymond Boute and Neville Dean reported on the Symposium on Teaching Formal Methods, which had finished just prior to the meeting. The Symposium was a success, considering the responses from the attendees and also their number: 50 in total. There could have been even more, but a large number of Chinese attendees had to cancel because they could not get visa to enter Belgium. Raymond expressed his regret at the low level of interest from within Belgium

A successor to this Symposium was discussed. Suggestions were to have an informal session at FM'05 and perhaps a new event during FM'06.

Valerie Harvey raised the issue of the importance of having good formal methods tools, both for teachers and for students. Current tools need to be assessed and in order to do this, and requirements for such tools have to be formulated first. Some good tools exist but are not in all senses complete. She seeks volunteers within FME to aid her with this. She also stressed the importance of sending feedback to tool vendors.

Valerie also expressed that in her view Vicky L. Almstrum should be nominated for a prize for the 10 years of work she has been doing consistently in the field of tool requirements.

8 ISOLA

Marcel Verhoef reported on his attendance of the first ISOLA conference. Tiziana Margaria introduced this conference last year to FME. Emphasis within ISOLA is on leveraging formal methods with applications, although this theme was not present in all the contributions. The number of attendees was quite high (75) and a good mix of industrial and academic representatives. The conference was very well organised. Much promotion was made for FME; Marcel was even given some speaking time during the conference banquet. Preliminary proceedings are available which might be published later through in Springer's LNCS series. The best papers will be published in STT Journal. The intention is to organise ISOLA every two year at the same location: Cyprus (this might mean it coincides with FM'06).

9 ForTIA

Marcel Verhoef reported on the current state of affairs. After the last meeting there had been progress. Jorge Cuellar had taken the initiative to organise the ForTIA AGM on 6 December in Munich, preceded by an informal meeting on 5 December. A candidate ForTIA Chair had been found: Volkmar Lotz. He will produce a plan for ForTIA strategy and activities, which will be presented at the ForTIA AGM.

Marcel also found a candidate for organising I-Day at FM'05, but there was no firm confirmation yet. Marcel also has a backup plan, in case this fails. A final decision whether I-Day at FM'05 goes ahead or not will be made at the ForTIA AGM.

Action 38/7: Nico Plat and Marcel Verhoef to report on the ForTIA AGM.

10 FM Education

José Oliveira reported on the results of the FME Subgroup on Education. A Survey on formal methods education in Europe has been made. The results of this survey were presented at the Symposium in Ghent and are now also available on the FME web site. This closes the first step of the subgroup's plan of activity.

Plans for future work include:

- Work on the on-line FM Education repository:
 - Choice of technology; this needs to be web-based; it should include modalities of change (authors, dates of change), or CVS-like support, as happens in the Wiki technology
 - Migration of currently available data;

- Improvements of the design of the repository - for instance, relationships amongst course units could be added (e.g. precedence); attaching links to selected education resources per topic;
- Inspired by the ACM/IEEE archetype, work should be started on the FMEK (EK = *Education Knowledge*) initiative. The main deliverable should be a report on “Curriculum Guidelines for Undergraduate Degree Programs in Formal Methods”. José asked if 2007 would be a reasonable deadline. Sub-activities include:
 - To set up a steering committee, invite people from outside FME, and of course to welcome volunteers;
 - To study the architecture and the development process of the SEEK report;
 - To define a consensual EK taxonomy. Becoming aware of the need for consensus on this is perhaps the most valuable side-effect of the survey;
 - To set up a liaison with ACM/IEEE or other institutions doing the same kind of activity.

The FME industrial courses or seminars task force should resume work. Formal methods are emerging in places like Microsoft, at least in their research labs.

11 Date and place of the next meeting

The next meeting (AGM 2005) will be held on Tuesday 19 April 2005 in Eindhoven, The Netherlands. Depending on the outcome of the ForTIA AGM in December, this meeting might be preceded by a ForTIA meeting on 18 April 2005.

12 Other Business

No issues were raised.

Summary of actions

Action 38/1: John Fitzgerald to initiate rediscussion of FMnet at a future meeting.

Action 38/2: Cliff Jones to send a message to FME members on contributions for FACJ.

Action 38/3: Nico Plat to add a link to the BCS FACS web site on the FME web site.

Action 38/4: John Fitzgerald to write introductory text to accompany the link to the BCS FACS web site.

Action 38/5: John Fitzgerald to pass the comments on the web site plan on to Bernhard Aichernig.

Action 38/6: FME Board to decide on the final version of the new FME logo.

Action 38/7: Nico Plat and Marcel Verhoef to report on the ForTIA AGM.

Enclosures

- Progress report on FM 2005
- Progress report on FM 2006
- E-mail by Bernhard Aichernig on the FME web site