

Formal Methods Europe
Minutes of the 15th Meeting held at St. Hugh's College, Oxford, UK, on 18
March 1996

Present: Peter Lucas (Chair)
Kees Pronk
John Fitzgerald
Nico Plat
Angela Alapide
Maurice Naftalin
Egon Börger
Hans-martin Hörcher
René Jacquart
Marie-Claude Gaudel
Jim Woodcock
John Nicholls
Peter Froome
Tim Denvir
Peter Gorm Larsen
Cliff Jones
Andrew Butterfield
Jan Storbak Pedersen
Gottfried Egger

Item 1: Minutes of meeting held on November 11 in Paris (Université de Paris-Sud)

Deferred to discussion by e-mail.

Item 2: Kees Pronk: financial reports

Two finance reports were distributed covering the year to 31 December 1994 and the year to 31 December 1995. The lower balance on the second report was accounted for by a small loss made at the FME'94 Symposium (Barcelona).

The committee resolved to receive an annual finance report from the Treasurer. An annual agenda item would be scheduled to this effect.

Item 3: FME'96

The committee congratulated Marie-Claude Gaudel and Jim Woodcock on the success of the symposium, noting particularly the high attendance (over 170). Prof. Gaudel in turn congratulated the Programme Committee on the quality of their work, seeing this as a sign of the Symposium's maturity. Cliff Jones cited the high quality of the organisation at the Programme committee's meeting.

Item 4: FME'97: PC Chair

Dates: The dates of the FME'97 Symposium were confirmed as 15-19 September 1997, consisting of 2 days of tutorials plus 3 days of submitted papers.

Programme Committee Chair for FME'97: A proposal was made that two co-chairs be appointed: Cliff Jones and John Fitzgerald.

Cliff Jones communicated a second proposal from Dines Bjørner. He had suggested expanding the Symposium's coverage to make it a world-wide event. A tentative title was *Design Calculi in action*. The conference would be multi-track and would aim to attract 400-500 participants. Under these circumstances, he would be able to act as PC Chair.

A positive reaction to the principle of this proposal was tempered with concern over its practicality for the 1997 Symposium. It was questioned whether the location in Graz could handle 500 participants; the financial risk could be undertaken and whether the organisation, including arrangement of financial backing, was possible at 18 months' notice.

It was resolved that the FME'97 Symposium would proceed in Graz with Cliff Jones and John Fitzgerald as PC co-chairs. The proposal regarding a world-wide conference would, however, be considered in conjunction with Item 5 regarding the location of the 1999 Symposium.

Item 5: FME'99: René Jacquart, proposal for venue: Toulouse

René Jacquart gave a presentation on Toulouse as a possible venue for the 1999 Symposium. He stressed the industrial and academic strength of the area, naming some of the high-technology companies with major centres around the city and pointing out that over 110000 people in the area are engaged in learning or research in institutes. A particular attraction is the high technology fair held in Toulouse every two years, attracting about 100000 visitors from technology-based industries, and providing a valuable potential link-up for the Symposium. Co-location would, however, entail delaying the Symposium from spring until autumn 1999.

An increasing trend towards co-location or amalgamation of conferences in order to remain viable was noted.

Action 15/1: Marie-Claude Gaudel to bring a discussion item to the next committee meeting regarding a link to ITAPS.

Action 15/2: René Jacquart, Peter Lucas and Dines Bjørner to hold discussions leading to a concrete proposal for a world congress at Toulouse in 1999. Report at the next FME Committee Meeting.

Item 6: Address Database for FME announcements

The suggestion had been made of appointing a member of the committee to act as maintainer of the FME mailing lists. It was emphasised that this was a demanding job, entailing the active correction of addresses for list members whose mail was being returned. The addition of telephone numbers, e-mail addresses and URLs was also recommended.

Action 15/3: Jim Woodcock to complete a revision of the database following the Symposium.

Action 15/4: Peter Lucas to find a willing list maintainer.

Item 7: Formal methods dissemination activities

Members involved in the the existing dissemination actions reported briefly:

FMEInfRes: The project had started officially on 1 January 1996 and one project meeting had been held.

FMEIndSem: The project was still in negotiation. Expected start date is about 1 April 1996 or 1 May 1996.

FM Guides: The project officially started on 1 January 1996. It was hoped to hold a project meeting and make initial video recordings during the Oxford Symposium.

Gottfried Egger reported that the INFORMED (formerly INFORMAL) consortium, whose work was discussed at the previous committee meeting, had completed its bid to the EC.

Item 8: Future directions for FME (Goran Anger)

Deferred.

Item 9: FME Membership

The committee welcomed Marie-Claude Gaudel as its newest member.

Peter Lucas reported that the committee membership list had not yet been examined to determine a list of inactive members. Action 13/3 is therefore carried over.

Regarding Action 12/9 to obtain nominations for a Finnish representative to the Committee, Goran Anger had a number of suggestions which were put to the committee. No firm decision was made.

Action 15/5: Cliff Jones to obtain further information on the nominees for a Finnish representative.

Item 10: Reports on FME activities

This item relates to producing a report for the Commission on the committee's work. Peter Lucas will coordinate the writing of the first report.

Item 11: Next meetings

Deferred to e-mail.

Item 12: John Nicholls: education on human and organisational aspects of FM

John Nicholls reported on the work of the OASIC group on non-technical issues associated with the introduction of formal methods. An outline of new course material is available.

Other Business

1. John Nicholls asked the Committee to sponsor a social event for delegates to the next meeting of ISO Subcommittee 22 on Programming Languages, to be hosted by the British Standards Institute. This would raise the profile of formal methods among those responsible engaged on programming language standardisation work. The committee agreed *nem con* to provide sponsorship of approximately UK£200.
2. Tim Denvir noted that the next ESSI Call for proposals should be available, requiring mid-June submissions for both process improvement experiments and dissemination actions.

3. Kees Pronk noted that expenses had still not been received from the Commission for the January 1995 meeting in Paris.
4. Peter Lucas communicated a request that the FME logo should appear on the programme of a forthcoming conference on Process Improvement. The committee agreed to lend its name to support individual sessions relevant to formal methods, but not the conference as a whole.
5. John Fitzgerald sought speakers for a meeting of the UK Software Reliability and Metrics Club in London on 2 July 1996. The subject of the meeting is to be "Benefits of Formal Methods".
6. Nico Plat announced that the Formal Methods Applications Database is now available on the World-wide Web. It is currently available under the following URLs:

<http://www.csr.ncl.ac.uk/projects/FME/index.html>
<http://www.cs.tcd.ie/www/mmacanai/FME/Master.html>