2004 IEEE International Conference on Fuzzy Systems

Budapest, Hungary
25–29 July, 2004

Message from the General Chair

July 2004 will be the first time in the history of the series of the annual IEEE International Conferences on Fuzzy Systems ("FUZZ-IEEE-s") when this most important meeting of the world's fuzzy scientists is held in a Central European country.

Hungarian fuzzy researchers have ever since played an active role in the international Computational Intelligence community, in the IEEE NNC and later NNS (soon becoming CIS), in the IFSA, and many other organizations, its members appearing even in difficult periods regularly at the major conferences of the field, submitting papers frequently to FSS, IEEE TFS and other journals.

In 2004 Hungary eventually got the chance to host FUZZ-IEEE and at the same time also its sister conference IJCNN in Budapest. We organizers sincerely hope that these twin conferences are becoming a great success, indeed. Considering the always fluctuating interest in participation at the large conferences, influenced by geographic location, travel costs, international politics, wars and terrorism, we really did not start preparing the conference with the sure conviction that our initial, somewhat optimistic, estimates for the number of submissions and participants will become true. I can report now with pleasure and thanks to all interested and contributing authors that we had a total of 441 submissions of which 312 papers have been accepted! While conferences often boost with the high percentage of rejections we must state it clearly that in every case a thorough and strict review process was followed by a final weighing of the reviewer's reports and eventually all papers were rejected where the average result was neutral or worse, or where at least one of the reviewers recommended vague or definite rejection. All papers thus accepted were definitely recommended for acceptance by all reviewers. (With the exception of the organized sessions where the reviewing process was always coordinated by the organizing chairs and so in most cases only the average opinion was communicated to the Program Chairs.)

It is not surprising that with such a high average standard we were in an extremely difficult situation when we had to classify some of the papers into poster sessions. However, even by reducing presentation time and squeezing six or sometimes even seven papers into the time slots originally foreseen for five papers, only 201 could be classified as orals (including the keynotes and plenaries), while the remaining 111 were accepted as poster papers. In order to enhance the efficiency of poster sessions I proposed a somewhat unusual way for poster presentations: papers were divided into topical groups as "poster sessions" with session chairs, who were asked to present their respective sessions in a short comprehensive overview, which would be followed by similarly short presentations of the authors themselves, in the form of a "guided tour" within the whole session (physically clustered in a close neighborhood). The idea is that after this oral introduction interested participants would be able to focus on the papers being most interesting for them, indeed. At the time of writing this message I can just hope that this technical innovation will be judged as useful and successful both by authors and attendance at the time of the conference!

Returning to the topic of the program in general, first of all it should be mentioned that I decided to open up towards a field where I see great possibilities of future interactions and mutually beneficial collaborations, namely Ubiquitous Computing. A keynote talk will be given by Dr. Ken Fishkin from Intel and I have great expectations that many interesting conversations and discussions between Ken and fuzzy (and maybe also neural networks) scientists will develop during and after the conference – starting possibly a number of new research directions, generating maybe an entirely new application area of Computational Intelligence.

At the end of the message I would like to thank all who helped with this conference. They are so numerous that I cannot mention their names, they are chairs and committee members, they are with the conference office or are session organizers, etc. I just want to thank here especially to the Minister of Informatics and Communication, Kálmán Kovács who kindly agreed to the Ministry becoming a sponsor and contribute to the costs of the meeting.

I wish you all a very successful scientific event and in addition some enjoyable days in fascinating Budapest, with lots of good Hungarian food and wine and a bunch of pleasant memories to take home.

LÁSZLÓ T. KÓCZY
General Chair

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