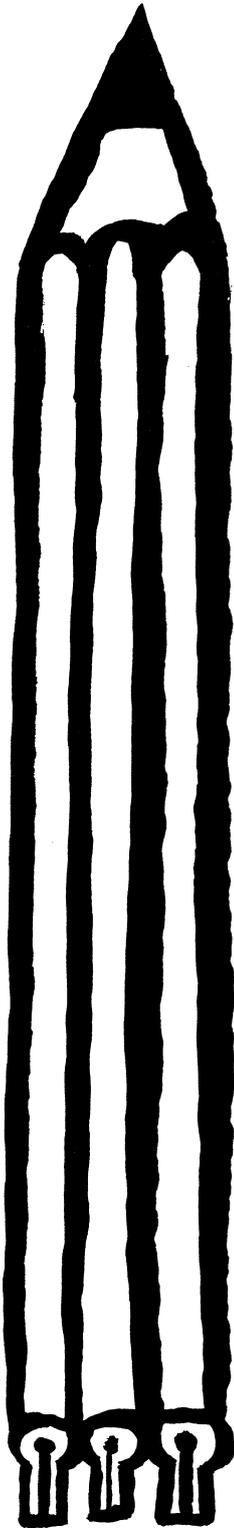


Dear colleagues,

The last year of my second term as president of the EATCS started after ICALP 2015 in Kyoto and will end at ICALP 2016 in Rome. This is a good time to reflect on what we have achieved together over the last three years and to look at the future of the EATCS and at what role our association can play in fostering the development of theoretical computer science.

You can read about the activities of the EATCS over the last year in our annual report and in several of our other reports that are either in this issue of the Bulletin or on the web. Therefore, here I will simply limit myself to saying that the EATCS is striving to give back to the theoretical computer science community much of what it receives from its members, who are the heart and soul of the association. Since our resources are limited, the Council of the EATCS has to make difficult decisions when selecting which activities it should support and what strategic decisions to take. I thoroughly enjoy working with the members of the council; I learn much from them and can rely on their substantial expertise and cogent opinions on all matters, both scientific and related to academic life in general. However, we are here to serve our members and I strongly encourage all of you to send me your opinions regarding our existing activities and what you think the EATCS should do for the theoretical computer science community and for our scientific subject.



An example of a discussion that the council has had, and on which we should like to solicit the opinion of our members via a poll at some point, is related to the possible establishment of a high quality, open access journal of the association. Founding a new journal is a lot of work and would require a substantial investment, which is only warranted if the community thinks that there is need for a new, open-access journal covering the whole of theoretical computer science. Would you submit your best work to such a journal and would you encourage young researchers to do so? These are non-trivial questions at a time when publications in high-impact outlets play an increasingly important role in the evaluation of individuals for academic positions and promotions, and in the allocation of financial resources for research at departmental and university level.

Recently I have had at least two opportunities to witness the growing importance of the impact of publication outlets for research communities and young researchers. I had the pleasure of attending the annual meeting of the Italian Chapter of the EATCS, which took place in Florence during the 16th Italian Conference on Theoretical Computer Science. (You can read my short report on that event in this issue of the Bulletin.) A large part of that meeting was devoted to discussing the weight of publications in high-quality conference proceedings in the evaluation of (theoretical) computer science research and computer science researchers in Italy today. In fact, much of the discussion dealt with how one can put together a

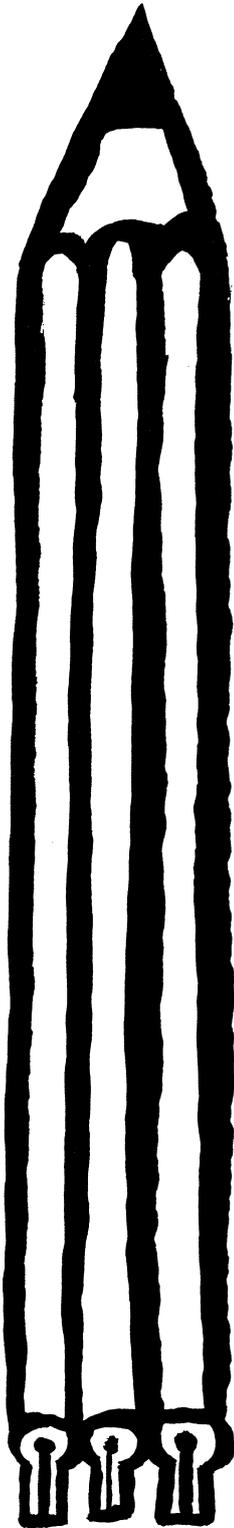


representative list of high-quality conferences in theoretical computer science that would be considered trustworthy by the Italian national evaluation body. This is a non-trivial enterprise and I wish my Italian colleagues the best of luck in their efforts.

In a different country, and in a different setting, I found myself discussing with a young researcher the importance of the number and order of the authors in publications in theoretical computer science, and whether having publications in which one is the first author is necessary or beneficial for one's career.

In both cases, I felt that having to worry about those issues does not create a good morale in the community and that it distracts one from focusing on doing the best scientific work one can do. In particular, I was struck by the fact that young researchers feel that they have to worry about issues that researchers from my generation did not need to consider at a similar point in their careers. This is probably unavoidable in the current research climate. However, as mentors, I feel that we should try to create an environment in which young researchers focus on producing the best work of which they are capable and publish it in appropriate outlets.

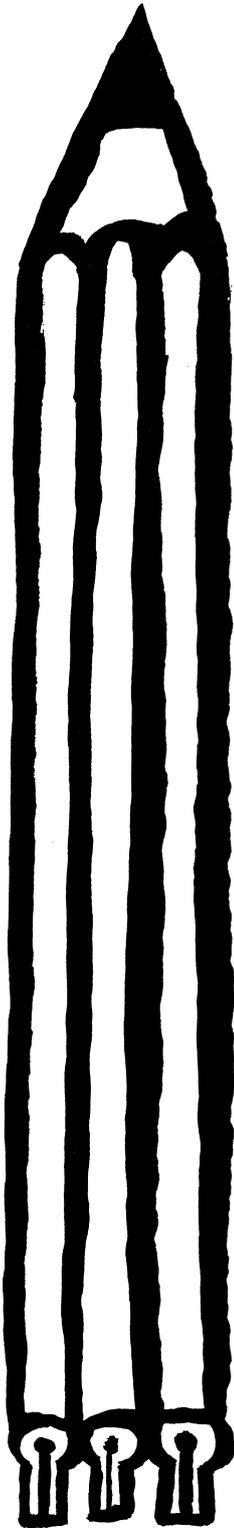
I enjoyed meeting several of you at ICALP/LICS 2015 in Kyoto. It was a pleasure to see many young researchers and students at the conference, and I really appreciated the good attendance we had at the event. Thanks to all of you who made the trip to Kyoto!



The 42nd ICALP was an excellent conference, both scientifically and socially. The organizers did their very best to make it a memorable event, and I like to think that all the participants felt welcome and enjoyed the conference. On behalf of the EATCS, I warmly thank Kazuo Iwama and his team for doing an outstanding job.

Given the breadth of theoretical computer science, no conference today can claim to cover all areas of research in the field. However, in my admittedly biased opinion, ICALP/LICS 2015 was a veritable theory festival, during which the curious conference attendee could be exposed to a very wide variety of topics within our field and to a range of mouth-watering invited talks and tutorials. To my mind, a brief look at the programme for the three tracks of ICALP 2015 and LICS 2015 also indicates that the division between different sub-areas of theoretical computer science is often artificial. There are papers that were presented at ICALP Track B and at LICS that ought to be of interest to researchers from algorithms and complexity, to name but two areas. Even though my research belongs to 'Volume B TCS', I thoroughly enjoyed all the invited talks dealing with ICALP Track A and C topics as well as the ICALP Masterclass on algorithms and complexity for puzzles and games. At the conference, Christos Papadimitriou expressed his view that the current fragmentation in TCS (volume A versus volume B, Europe versus USA) is regrettable and reversible. For what it is worth, I agree with Christos wholeheartedly.

You can read my report on ICALP 2015 in this issue of the Bulletin. Additional

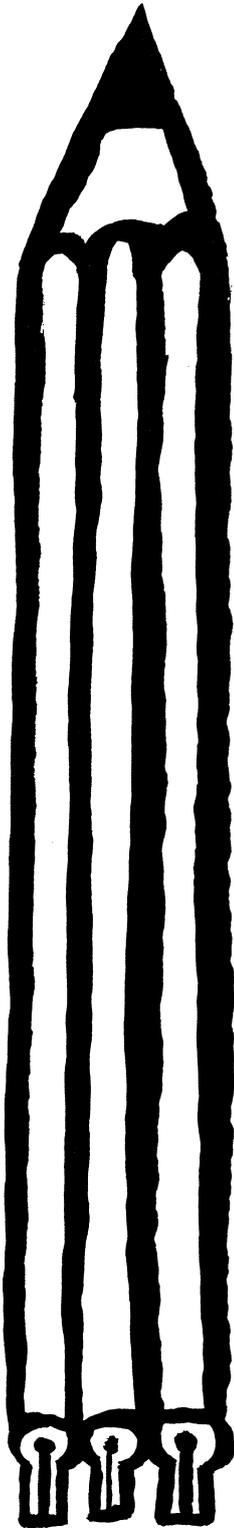


information on the co-located ICALP/LICS conference is available on my professional blog (<http://processalgebra.blogspot.is/>). ICALP 2016 will be held in Rome. The final call for papers for the conference will be ready for distribution soon.

The general assembly of the EATCS decided that ICALP 2017 will be held in Warsaw, Poland. I thank Mikołaj Bojańczyk, Piotr Sankowski and their collaborators for their willingness to host us in Rome.

ICALP 2016 will be the first installment of the conference with open-access proceedings published in LIPIcs. Regarding publications, I strongly encourage all the members of the EATCS to make all their publications freely accessible on line. It is our duty, as well as being in the interests of our science and in our own interest, to make access to our scientific work free of financial barriers for any researcher. This is possible even for papers that have appeared in journals and conference proceedings published by commercial publishers.

As usual at this time of the year, the EATCS issues calls for nominations for its awards: the EATCS Award, EATCS Fellows, the Gödel Prize, the Presburger Award and the EATCS Distinguished Dissertation Awards. You can read the calls in this issue of the Bulletin; they have also been posted on mailing lists, blogs and social networks. Please distribute the calls as you see fit. Most importantly, I hope that you will take the time to nominate excellent researchers, papers and doctoral dissertations for these awards. Awards and prizes are a way to recognize the achievement of some of our many outstanding



colleagues and they put our favourite research fields in the spotlight. Last, but by no means least, awards provide examples and inspiration for the younger generations of researchers who are the future of our field as a whole. Writing a nomination takes some of our precious time, but it is worth it.

I thank you for reading this letter, and look forward to hearing suggestions and opinions from the members of the EATCS. Feel free to write to me at president@eatcs.org. I am at your service.

*Luca Aceto, Reykjavik, Iceland
October 2015*