

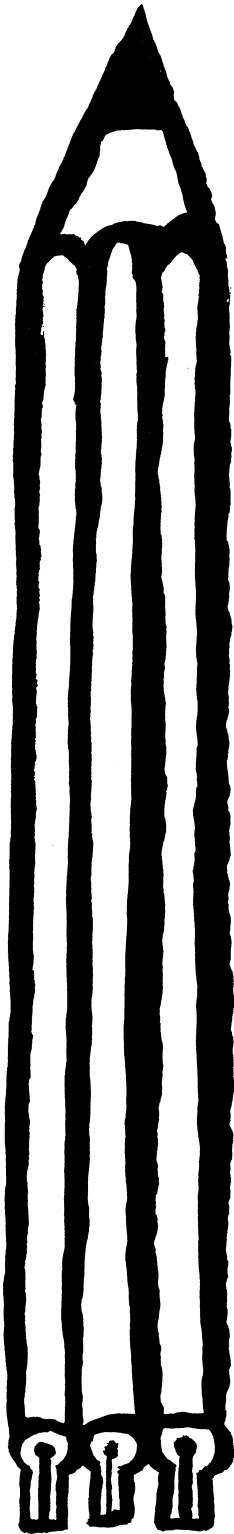


Dear colleagues,

I usually enjoy writing in all forms and I might even be considered a compulsive writer. However, for several reasons, this time I am finding it difficult to do so.

On a personal note, this is my last letter to you as president of the EATCS. At ICALP 2016 I will have served two terms at the helm of our association and I have decided not to run for a third term. I have thoroughly enjoyed working for the theoretical computer science community as a member of the EATCS Council for over ten years, and I have been truly honoured to serve as the president of association since July 2012, and to cooperate with the members of the council and with Ioannis Chatzigiannakis and Efi Chita at the EATCS Secretary Office. I have also had a very enjoyable and fruitful collaboration with Kazuo Iwama, the editor in chief of the Bulletin, under whose energetic leadership our flagship publication has consistently been of excellent quality. I have learned much from all of them.

However, the increasing pressures of our job are such that I feel that it is time for me to step down. I have probably given what I could to the EATCS, and our association will benefit from an influx of fresh blood and new ideas. The new leadership of the EATCS (president and vice-presidents) will be announced officially at the General Assembly at ICALP 2016 in Rome. I have no doubt that its members will make the EATCS more visible and influential than I have done. I will keep serving the EATCS as a loyal member



and an interested observer.

At ICALP 2016, we will also complete the process of changing the seat of the EATCS from Antwerp to Brussels. After a very long and sterling service, our treasurer Dirk Janssens will also take leave from the association. Dirk has been a stalwart of the EATCS and he deserves our most sincere thanks for all he has done over the years. Following his example won't be easy. Fortunately, our colleague Jean-Francois Raskin (Université Libre de Bruxelles) has agreed to take over the job of treasurer of the EATCS. On behalf of the EATCS, I thank Dirk and Jean-Francois, and wish them all the best for the future.

The recent, untimely passing away of several members of our community also makes the task of writing this letter difficult. This issue of the Bulletin of the EATCS features obituaries for Hartmut Ehrig, David Stifler Johnson and Helmut Veith. In addition, our good colleague and friend Zoltán Ésik passed away suddenly on Wednesday, 25 May, in the hotel room where he was staying with his wife during a visit to the research group led by my wife and me at Reykjavik University. He had delivered a survey talk at Reykjavik University on the "Equational Logic of Fixed Point Operations" on Tuesday, 24 May, and we were making plans for the coming days and for mutual visits over the next few months. Obituaries for Zoltán will appear in the October 2016 issue of the Bulletin.

We will remember these colleagues at ICALP 2016 and I encourage the members of the theoretical computer science community to honour their memory by studying their work and disseminating it amongst their



students. In 1918, the Italian poet Giuseppe Ungaretti wrote the following very short poem

*Si sta come
d'autunno
sugli alberi
le foglie*

which can be loosely translated as "We are like tree leaves in autumn". I learned that poem by heart like many other Italian school kids. It is only much later in life that one understands the true meaning of those words. However, the reaction of our community to the passing away of the above-mentioned colleagues has made me realize that the tree that hosted their leaves has very deep roots and that we can preserve those leaves for posterity.

Let's go back to core EATCS business. At this time of the year, the theoretical computer science community is about to meet at ICALP, the flagship conference of our association. As you know, the 43rd ICALP will take place in the period 12-15 July 2016 in Rome, Italy.

ICALP 2016 had the largest number of submissions in history (515 papers). Moreover, and most importantly, all tracks received many submission of very high quality. The PCs for the three tracks, which were expertly led by Yuval Rabani (Track A), Davide Sangiorgi (Track B) and Michael Mitzenmacher (Track C), did an amazing job in selecting an exciting conference programme.

I am very grateful to Tiziana Calamoneri, Irene Finocchi, Nicola Galesi, Daniele Gorla and their team for the extraordinary work they have done in organizing ICALP 2016.



The programme of ICALP 2016 will highlight research across many areas within theoretical computer science. I invite you to go to talks even outside your own research field. In particular, I hope that all participants will make a point of attending all the invited talks, which will be delivered by Subhash Khot, Marta Z. Kwiatkowska, Xavier Leroy and Devavrat Shah.

The best paper awards at ICALP 2016 will go to the following articles: Amplifiers for the Moran Process by Andreas Galanis, Andreas Göbel, Leslie Ann Goldberg, John Lapinskas and David Richerby (Track A), An Almost Cubic Lower Bound for Depth Three Arithmetic Circuits by Neeraj Kayal, Chandan Saha and SÅlba stien Tavenas (Track A), and Polynomial Time Corresponds to Solutions of Polynomial Ordinary Differential Equations of Polynomial Length by Olivier Bournez, Daniel Graca and Amaury Pouly (Track B).

The following papers will receive the best student paper awards: Analysing Survey Propagation Guided Decimation on Random Formulas by Samuel Hetterich (Track A), and An Optimal Dual Fault Tolerant Reachability Oracle by Keerti Choudhary (Track C). Congratulations to the authors of the award-receiving papers!

As usual, a report on the conference will be published in the October 2016 issue of the Bulletin. I also hope that there will be some coverage of the event on the blogs devoted to theoretical computer science. I will issue a call for guest bloggers on my professional blog myself.

ICALP 2016 will be the first edition of the conference whose proceedings will be



available in open-access form in the *LIPICs* series. The EATCS Council decided to move to open-access proceedings for its flagship conference as a service to the scientific community as a whole. I sincerely hope that readers of this letter will support this move, as well as our other activities, by becoming a member of the EATCS. This will allow us to use some of the financial resources of the association to cover the article processing charges for *LIPICs* articles. Those charges will be increasing in the coming years, but will stay small and will guarantee free access to the archival version of the articles in the *ICALP* proceedings to researchers all over the world.

Apart from the invited and contributed talks, *ICALP 2016* will feature the presentation of the EATCS Award 2016 to Dexter Kozen, of the Gödel Prize 2016 to Stephen Brookes and Peter O'Hearn, and of the Presburger Award 2016 to Mark Braverman. Moreover, during the conference, we will honour the EATCS Fellows class of 2016, who are -the late Zoltán Ésik (University of Szeged, Hungary) for "contributions to the fields of automata and formal languages, iteration theories, algebra and logic in computer science, and in particular to their connections. He has been able to apply deep theorems of some area to problems of other fields, yielding particularly short, beautiful and mathematically concise proofs."

-David Harel (Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel) for "fundamental contributions to program verification, database theory, and software engineering,



as well as for exceptional merits as a writer and teacher. The Statecharts model has had profound impact on software and systems engineering.”

-Giuseppe F. Italiano (University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy) for “fundamental contributions to the design and analysis of algorithms for solving theoretical and applied problems in graphs and massive data sets, and for his role in establishing the field of algorithm engineering.”

-Kurt Mehlhorn (Max-Planck-Institut für Informatik, Germany) for “his influential contribution to the whole field of algorithmics over the past decades. In addition to key theoretical contributions, he has brought basic research closer to practice.”

-Scott A. Smolka (Stony Brook University, USA) for “fundamental contributions to process algebra, model checking, probabilistic processes, runtime verification, and more recently for the successful application of most of these theories to cardiac-cell modelling and analysis.”

Last, but not least, the EATCS Distinguished Dissertation Award Committee 2016 has selected the following three theses for the EATCS Distinguished Dissertation Award for 2016:

-Radu Curticapean, “The Simple, Little and Slow Things Count: On Parameterized Counting Complexity”, -Heng Guo, “Complexity Classification of Exact and Approximate Counting Problems”,

-Georg Zetsche, “Monoids as storage mechanisms”.



On behalf of the EATCS, I heartily thank the members of the award, dissertation and fellow committees for their work in the selection of this stellar set of award recipients and fellows. It will be a great honour to celebrate the work of these colleagues during ICALP 2016.

Even though ICALP 2016 has not taken place yet, we are already busy preparing future editions of the conference. As you may know already, ICALP 2017 will be held in Warsaw, Poland, in the period 10-14 July 2017. The conference chairs will be Mikolaj Bojanczyk and Piotr Sankowski. The PC chairs for the conference will be Piotr Indyk (MIT, USA) for Track A, Anca Muscholl (LaBRI and Université Bordeaux, France) for Track B and Fabian Kuhn (University of Freiburg, Germany) for Track C. The preliminary call for papers for the conference will be available in Rome. Moreover, during the general assembly at ICALP 2016, we will examine a bid to host ICALP 2018 in Prague, Czech Republic.

The EATCS continues to be active on increasingly many fronts. We have recently stipulated a new reciprocity agreement with the ACM Special Interest Group on Electronic Commerce (ACM SIGecom). We have also announced that the 2016 Alonzo Church Award for Outstanding Contributions to Logic and Computation will be given to Rajeev Alur and David Dill for their invention of timed automata. The Alonzo Church Award is a new major prize in cooperation with ACM Special Interest Group on Logic and Computation, the European Association for Computer Science Logic and the Kurt Gödel Society.

I interviewed the recipients of the 2016



Gödel Prize and of the 2016 Alonzo Church Award for the Bulletin of the EATCS. You can read the interviews in this issue of the Bulletin and I hope that you'll enjoy them as much as I did. I feel that they shed light on the development of the work that led to those awards and offer many general lessons about research from which we can all learn something new. As usual, let me remind you that, at least until the middle of July this year, you are most welcome to send me your comments, criticisms and suggestions for improving the impact of the EATCS on the theoretical-computer-science community at president@eatcs.org. I look forward to seeing many of you in Rome for ICALP 2016 and to discussing ways of improving the impact of the EATCS within the theoretical-computer-science community at the general assembly.

*Luca Aceto, Reykjavik, Iceland
June 2016*