European Network for the Advancement of

Artificial Cognitive Systems

Meeting of the

Executive Committee

Frankfurt Airport Conference Centre
Friday 24th March 2006

NOTES

Participants: Andreas Engel, David Vernon, Erik Hollnagel, Fred Cummins, Markus Vincze, Tom Ziemke, Christoph von der Malsburg, Bill Sharpe.
Apologies:, Guy Tiberghien,. Juergen Jost, Peter F. Dominey, Matthias Scheutz, Eva Benova, George Stork.

The following is a summary of the main issues discussed at the second meeting of the Executive Committee.

Membership

- There are now 102 members of euCognition.

  The membership is divided as follows:

  - 56 members that work on CogSys projects
  - 17 members that were associated with ECVision (and don't work on CogSys projects)
  - 29 members that are not associated with CogSys projects or ECVision

- The Executive Committee agreed that in future DV should screen applications for membership and admit members without referring the application to the Executive if the applicant presents a prima facie case for admission.

Education & Training Activities

Markus Vincze introduced several matters associated with education and training. These include:

- A list of summer-schools will be made available on the website as soon as possible.
- A student competition will be launched. This will involve student making a presentation about their research at the second six-monthly meeting in January 2007. A prize will be awarded to the overall winner. Other prizes will be awarded to other students for contributions in constituent areas of cognitive systems.
- Bernd Neumann has offered to make a course on knowledge-based cognitive vision available for dissemination on the euCognition website.
- A list of links to completed Ph.D. and M.Sc. dissertations will be made available on the web.

- A list of links to open student positions will be made available on the web.
- An annotated bibliography of relevant publications will be made available on the web, initially based on the publications cited by members in their applications for membership.
- It was agreed that euCognition will not provide support directly to members to assist them in attending summer-schools (e.g. travel, registration fees). Instead, euCognition sees its role more in providing assistance to the organizers to run these events in whatever form is appropriate and practicable.

Update on Scientific Outlook Activities
- Matters arising from the student breakout session at the inaugural meeting are included here.
- The members expressed a strong demand for themed workshops. These should be based on the interests of the community. DV will launch a questionnaire on the web to ask for preferences. Topics could include definition & scope of cognition, benchmarking, cybernetics (re-visited); the recent Commission FP7 planning workshops – "Thematic workshops towards a Cognitive Systems research agenda in FP7" (see http://www.cordis.lu/ist/cognition/presentations.htm) - is also good source of topics.
- A discussion board on the research roadmap should be added to the website at some point.
- The members expressed a desire for more time at meetings to be devoted to posters and socializing between members.
- There is a strong demand for pre-developed functional components – plug-in components - that members could use directly in their cognitive systems without having to re-develop them from scratch.
- Links on the website should be annotated.

Update on Outreach Activities
- Outreach activities need to create sense of identity: "Who we are; where we are; what should we become; and what should we do".
- Emotion: there should be more material on emotion as a component of cognition.
- Language and speech: there should be more material on language and speech as a component of cognition.
- Material should in general incite people to say 'I wish I'd known this before!".
- Outreach to undergraduate students, school children, and the general public. Material should emphasize the challenges of the area and the shift toward interdisciplinary work. Clever or adaptive systems of all kinds should be included as examples, even if they don't fulfill all the requirements of a complete archetypal cognitive system.
- A collection of "cognition briefings" will be created. These briefing will be in the style of the American Society for Neuroscience (e.g. public resources at http://web.sfn.org/Template.cfm?Section=PublicResources and fact sheets at http://hosting.texoma.net/business/biotech/thia-faq.htm). They will typically be two pages in length, written for a public audience, scientifically oriented, and will provide links for further reading. The Executive Committee agreed to write the first 12 briefings, on topics of their choice.

Policy on email to the members' distribution list

Postings to the members email distribution list will be restricted to items directly linked to euCognition, such as events that are co-sponsored by the network. Notices on other relevant events (e.g. calls for papers, workshop announcements) will be posted on the website.

Student Membership Grade

A new grade of member will be introduced: Student Member. This grade will differ from the current grade of membership in 2 key ways:

1. Student members will not be obliged to make a formal contribution to the network (of course they can if they wish);
2. Student members will not be permitted to submit Network Action proposals (although their supervisors could submit them if they are members).

Student membership is restricted to graduate students working on cognitive systems theses (verified by their supervisor who must be a member of euCognition)

A Student Member Application Form will be made available on the website soon.

Network Action Proposal from Joanna Bryson

A network action submitted by Joanna Bryson for a student exchange was discussed. Members of the Executive Committee present at the meeting voted unanimously to support it. The approval of the Commission Project Officer(s) will now be sought.

Website Matters

DV informed the meeting that the person who had been offered a contract to look after the euCognition website has declined the offer. DV will continue to work on developing the site and add content as much as time and resources permit.

Update on administration of costs etc.

There have been delays in reimbursing members as we have worked out way though some unexpected administrative constraints. Claims are now being processed more effectively and it is hoped to decrease the period between the submission of a claim and the funds being transferred to the member.

Six-Monthly Meetings

The first six-monthly meeting will be held in Vienna on the 3rd July. The meeting will commence at 10:00 and finish at approximately 17:00. The meeting will begin with a ½ hour overview of the networks current activities and plans for the future. There will then be presentations from invited speakers on the topic of "Getting around in the world – does all navigation require cognition?". This will be followed by a discussion session. The day will close with a poster session and reception.

Several possible guest speakers have been identified and we hope to be able to get 3-4 to agree to participate, each addressing the topic from difference perspectives (e.g. psychology, neuroscience, robotics, animal migration and foraging, …).

The second six-monthly meeting will be held on the 11th and 12th January 2007. The venue will be either Venice or Cannes. It will be a two-day meeting. The first day will be devoted to the student competition mentioned above and will be followed by a Meeting Dinner at which the winners will be announced. The second day will be devoted to guest speakers and topical discussions in the same format as the 1st six-monthly meeting. The winner of the student competition will also be asked to make a short presentation.

Date of Next Meeting
The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on the 6th October. The default venue is Frankfurt, pending the identification of a more convenient location.