

**Formal Methods Europe
Minutes of the 34th meeting
held at CNR, Pisa, Italy
Thursday 11 and Friday 12 September 2003**

Present at the meeting were:

- Keijiro Araki (F)
- Juan Bicarrequi ☺
- Tommaso Bolognesi (F)
- Raymond Boute ☺
- Jonathan Bowen ☺
- Ana Cavalcanti ☺
- Judith Collan (F)
- David Crocker ☺
- Tim Denvir ☺
- Alessandro Fantechi ☺
- John Fitzgerald (Chairman) ☺
- Marcelo Frias (T)
- Stefania Gnesi ☺
- Michael Goldsmith ☺
- Anthony Hall ☺
- Ian Hayes ☺
- Neil Henderson (F)
- Randolph Johnson ☺
- Cliff Jones (F)
- Mark Lawford (F)
- Dino Mandrioli ☺
- Tiziana Margaria ☺
- Stephen Paynter ☺
- Nico Plat (Secretary) ☺
- Kees Pronk (Treasurer) ☺
- Andreas Roth (T)
- Jin Song Dong ☺
- Marcel Verhoef ☺
- Alan Wassying (F)
- Jim Woodcock ☺

☺ Present both Thursday and Friday

(T) Present on Thursday only

(F) Present on Friday only

Apologies had been received from: José Oliveira, Jan Storbank Pedersen, Peter Gorm Larsen, Paul Mukherjee and Eerke Boiten.

[Thursday 11 September 2003]

1 Welcome

John Fitzgerald welcomed all those present at the meeting. He congratulated the Organisers of FM 2003, in particular Stefania Gnesi, Alessandro Fantechi, Dino Mandrioli and Keijiro Araki, on the success of the event.

2 Agree upon agenda

The agenda distributed at the meeting was agreed upon.

3 Minutes of the meeting held in Braga on 22 May 2003

In order to save time, it was decided to postpone discussion and approval of these minutes until the next meeting.

Michael Goldsmith stated that remarks made in the minutes about lack of room for tutorials at FM 2003 were not, in fact, true. John Fitzgerald advised that the matter should be taken up with the organisers of the Symposium.

4 Action list

In order to save time, the action list was not reviewed.

5 Status report on FM03

Stefania Gnesi and Dino Mandrioli gave a brief status report on FM'03. Dino remarked that he was very happy the way the event had gone so far. In preparation, the co-operation between the various members of the OC and PC had been excellent. The total number of participants, including the satellite events, would probably be about 200. Participants were given the opportunity to attend e.g. one day only, for reasons of time (mostly industrial attendees) and cost. There had been a great number of submissions which, in Dino's view, were a good reflection of what is going on in the formal methods community. Overall the quality was very good. Given the high number of submissions, the PC had been too small: member had reviewed 15 papers on average and this was considered too much. He advised that future PC chairs consider expanding the committee.

Contributions by sponsors were appreciated. In return they got a slot.

Marcel Verhoef asked about the balance between academic and industrial papers. Dino replied the PC had tried really hard to reach such a balance but that it had not been easy. Perhaps the (newly formed) ForTIA movement can act as a "channel" to industry at future events.

David Crocker remarked that there was an unfortunate clash between I-Day'03 and the tutorials on Tuesday, as both are interesting for 'consumers' of formal methods. This should also be kept in mind for future events. At the same time it was felt that I-Day should remain an integrated part of the Symposium although Anthony thought that I-Day had served its purpose and that the papers there could just as well be integrated with the rest of the Symposium programme.

Dino Mandrioli said he was very impressed by the presentations given by commercial sponsors. They were highly technical and not at all "sales presentations".

Michael Goldsmith said that it was a pity that there was a tools exhibition but no tools presentation: this would also have been interesting for industrial participants.

Tiziana Margaria asked if papers from the Symposium could be used for a special issue of the journal 'Software Tools for Technology Transfer', published by Springer Verlag. Tiziana is closely involved with this journal. Dino Mandrioli had mixed feelings about this. In any case such papers need to be revised and it is very difficult to select the 'best' papers. Tiziana remarked that the procedure would be informal and rather ad-hoc: she suggested that she would make a proposal for papers to include. She would then get in contact with Keijiro Araki, Anthony Hall, Dino Mandrioli, Stefania Gnesi and John Fitzgerald to discuss the matter further.

Action 34/1: Tiziana Margaria to select papers from the FM 2003 proceedings for inclusion in Software Tools for Technology Transfer.

The meeting congratulated Dino Mandrioli, Stefania Gnesi, Alessandro Fantechi and all their fellow organisers on the success of the organisation of FM 2003 so far.

6 ForTIA/I-day

Anthony Hall was impressed at I-Day'03 about the support present for the ForTIA movement. A board had now been established of 7 persons, chaired by him. ForTIA will, among other issues, address the provision of case studies and Open Source tools. Membership is free for the first year but later on contributions will be required by its members. ForTIA will act as a subgroup of FME. A booklet has been made explaining its goals and methods of operation.

7 Status of the FME workshop in Ghent (27 November 2003)

Raymond Boute reported on the workshop that he will organize in Ghent on 27 November (<http://www.intec.rug.ac.be/groupsites/formal/Workshop03/Website.htm>). There is a call for contributions although part of the program has already been set (more specifically, abstracts have been received from the company that sells Perfect Developer, Bart Jacobs (University of Nijmegen) and Stefania Gnesi (ISTI-CNR). Abstracts have been promised by Frits Vaandrager (University of Nijmegen), Jean-Francois Raskin (ULB) and Christophe Ponsard (CETIC/FAUST). More information can be found at the website. Raymond said that Belgium is rather underdeveloped with respect to formal methods and Raymond's aim is to change that. Too few students are educated in formal methods and therefore there have no critical mass to persuade their employers to look into this technology. Therefore, "challenging" talks are more than welcome. A total audience of about 50 people is expected to be present.

8 Conference on FM Education

Dines Bjørner had previously announced that Colognet could provide a funding of EUR 5000 for the organisation of a conference dedicated to formal methods education. He had approached Raymond Boute just prior to the meeting to see if he was willing to host and organise this event in Ghent, Belgium, probably early spring 2004. Raymond will decide soon, but if he does he could probably get a funding of EUR 4500 from the Belgium Research Council. We will have to move quickly, especially in selecting a date (when Colognet no longer exists no more funding can be provided).

Action 34/2: John Fitzgerald to suggest a date for the Conference on FM Education

Jonathan Bowen mentioned that there would be a workshop on FM Education at Oxford Brookes University on 12 December 2003.

Action 34/3: Nico Plat to include a link to the Workshop on FM Education on 12 December to the FME website.

9 FM'05/FM'06

A few locations were suggested at the previous meeting to hold FM'05: Shanghai, Macau (probably supported by the Chinese government), Portugal, London, McMaster University in Canada and Southampton. Not all these had been confirmed by a formal proposal yet. In addition, Newcastle University is willing to organise FM'05. It was decided that in two weeks time a location and PC-Chair should be decided upon. Since Kees Pronk was going on vacation and John Fitzgerald is involved with one of the proposals, Nico Plat should make the final decision, advised by the Symposium subgroup.

Action 34/4: Nico Plat to decide on the location/organisation for FM'05

Suggestions for the organisation/location of FM'06 are already welcomed. Tommaso Bolognesi suggested collocating FM'06 with Forte.

David Crocker suggested moving the Symposium from the current 18 month cycle to a 12-month cycle, inspired by the thought that the formal methods field is growing in maturity and therefore

needs more frequent events. He was concerned that the symposium may be missing good and up-to-date material because of its infrequency. There was extensive discussion of this. While it was agreed that some material would be missed by an 18-month conference, the current cycle helped to keep FM "special", attracting high quality papers, and had some practical advantages, e.g. obviating the need to run two PC/OCs simultaneously. There was also some concern that attendances might drop if the conference became annual. Marcel Verhoef suggested retaining the 18 month cycle, perhaps organising smaller events in between symposia, such as the Ghent Workshop and the teaching symposium discussed earlier. There was broad agreement with this strategy.

[Friday 12 September 2003]

10 FMnet Network of Excellence Proposal

Jonathan Bowen reported on the status of the FMnet Network of Excellence Proposal. The 6th Framework programme apparently is a large effort and he had had realistic talks with the officials in Brussels about it. Jonathan is writing the proposal now (open source initiatives are much welcomed) and everybody who is interested is invited to contact him. Deadline for submission is 15 October 2003. Jonathan hopes that FME will be a consortium partner.

Kees Pronk mentioned another such proposal: a Network of Excellence on Component Based Development (CBD). It was left to the individual members to get involved with this project if they were interested.

11 FME website

The status of the FME website was discussed again. Regarding the use of students Raymond Boute argued that we should not fall in the same pitfall again but we should Open Source Software (OSS) if possible.

It was agreed that the use of a Content Management System (CMS) was necessary to allow easy maintenance of the FME website. In practice, there is little choice as, without such a system, the website will not be maintained at all due to lack of effort.

The offer made by West Consulting (see Minutes 33rd meeting) still stands. In addition, West is willing to guarantee to sponsor the website by hosting it for three consecutive years. The initial setting up of the database and templates must be paid for by FME (€ 2.500,-). As an alternative (desired at the 33rd meeting), Kees Pronk suggested that a free CMS is put in place (and templates are made) by a group of his students in return for a contribution to funds to subsidise a study trip. It was agreed that Jonathan Bowen would study the proposals made by West Consulting and by Kees Pronk and to advise to John Fitzgerald to make a decision on this matter. Jonathan argued that the offer should include willingness to make the website comply with accessibility standards such as those required in the UK by the Disability Discrimination Act that is currently being put in place.

Action 34/5: Jonathan Bowen to advise to John Fitzgerald on the choice of a CMS for maintaining the FME website

Action 34/6: John Fitzgerald to decide on the choice of a CMS for maintaining the FME website

11 Subgroups

Kees reported that bylaws for the FME subgroups are currently being prepared (the issues being mainly financial: who is responsible for the spending of the subgroups, fees, etc.). Marcel Verhoef suggested examining the rules that established organisations such as IEEE already have in place.

Education Subgroup: José Oliveira will send in a report soon.

Action 34/7: José Oliveira to submit a report on the status of the Education Subgroup

The Symposium Subgroup has undertaken very little activity. John Fitzgerald will reconstruct the subgroup; main focus will be to watch over the continuity of the FME Symposia (which is now the task of the Chairman).

Action 34/8: John Fitzgerald to reconstruct the Symposium Subgroup

Michael Goldsmith suggested raising the profile of the subgroups by organising dedicated subgroup events at each FME Symposium.

12 Any Other Business

Jonathan Bowen is BCS/FACS Chairman. A new impulse will be given to the BCS/FACS newsletter, but not including FME matters. He suggested that there might be two separate newsletters.

Action 34/9: John Fitzgerald and Kees Pronk to discuss the matter of an FME newsletter

John Fitzgerald encouraged the people present who are not an FME members to become so.

13 Date and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be organised on 28 November 2003 in Ghent, Belgium. This meeting will also be the 2003 AGM. The meeting will be preceded by a one day workshop on 27 November 2003.

Summary of actions

Action 28/5: John Fitzgerald to coordinate the production of a document on “Best practices while organising a FME symposium”

Action 30/15: Nico Plat to find a volunteer to set up a web page with FME members and associated skills

Action 32/1: John Fitzgerald to stress the need for advertisements of workshops in the Symposium Guidelines

Action 32/6: Jonathan Bowen to organize an FME funded meeting to put together the final FMnet proposal

Action 32/13: John Fitzgerald and Jonathan Bowen to formulate a proposal for FME sponsorship of ZB2003

Action 33/1: John Fitzgerald to setup a questionnaire to evaluate FM'03 amongst its participants

Action 33/2: John Fitzgerald to send Jonathan Bowen a reminder to formulate a proposal for FME sponsorship of ZB2003

Action 33/3: Dino Mandrioli to select four papers for FM'03 I-Day

Action 33/4: Dines Bjørner to justify initial funding of I-Day by FME

Action 33/5: Nico Plat to inform Tim Denvir of this part of the I-Day part of the meeting

Action 33/6: Nico Plat to present alternatives for maintaining the FME web site

Action 33/7: Nico Plat to ask Raymond Boute to organise an FME meeting in Ghent

Action 34/1: Tiziana Margaria to select papers from the FM 2003 proceedings for inclusion in Software Tools for Technology Transfer.

Action 34/2: John Fitzgerald to suggest a date for the Conference on FM Education

Action 34/3: Nico Plat to include a link to the Workshop on FM Education on 12 December to the FME website.

Action 34/4: Nico Plat to decide on the location/organisation for FM'05

Action 34/5: Jonathan Bowen to advise to John Fitzgerald on the choice of a CMS for maintaining the FME website

Action 34/6: John Fitzgerald to decide on the choice of a CMS for maintaining the FME website

Action 34/7: José Oliveira to submit a report on the status of the Education Subgroup

Action 34/8: John Fitzgerald to reconstruct the Symposium Subgroup

Action 34/9: John Fitzgerald and Kees Pronk to discuss the matter of an FME newsletter

Members of the Subgroup on Education:

- Dines Bjørner
- Eerke Boiten
- Raymond Boute
- Andrew Butterfield
- John Fitzgerald
- Randolph Johnson
- Steve King
- Peter Lucas
- Michael Mac an Airchinnigh
- Dino Mandrioli
- Andrew Martin
- José Oliveira (Convenor)
- Kees Pronk
- Wolfgang Reisg

Members of the Web Publications (to be formed):

- Jonathan Bowen
- John Fitzgerald
- Stefan Gruner (Convenor)

Members of the FMnet Subgroup (to be formed):

- Dines Bjørner
- John Fitzgerald
- Jan Storbank Pedersen
- Nico Plat

Members of the Subgroup on Industrial Associations (to be formed):

- Dines Bjørner

Members of the subgroup on the FME symposium:

- Dines Bjørner
- Lars-Henrik Eriksson
- John Fitzgerald
- Michael Goldsmith
- Stefania Gnesi (Convenor)
- Peter Lindsay
- Paul Mukherjee
- José Oliveira
- Nico Plat
- Kees Pronk
- Wolfgang Reisig