VDM-EUROPE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 1990

IN BRUSSELS

J. Dawes (ICL) — Secretary

8 November 1990

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Present: Søren Prehn (Chair) CRI, Denmark
                Derek Andrews, University of Leicester, UK
                Patrick Behm, Bull, France
                Dines Bjørner, Technical University of Denmark
                Christoph Blaue, University of Kiel, Germany
                Andrzej Blikle, Polish Academy of Sciences
                Dominique Bolignano, Bull, France
                John Dawes, (Secretary), ICL, UK
                Tim Denvir, Praxis Systems/DTI, UK
                Karel de Vriendt, CEC, Belgium
                Margaret Gallery, Generics Ltd, Ireland
                Hans-Martin Horcher, IP-Systems, Kiel, Germany
                Cliff Jones, University of Manchester
                Hans Langmaack, University of Kiel
                Peter Gorm Larsen, IFAD
                Benny Graff Mortensen, IFAD, Denmark
                Fernando Mejia, Bull
                Jimmi S. Pettersson, TFL, Denmark
                Nico Plat, Delft University, Netherlands
                Uwe Schmidt, F.H.Wedel, Germany
                Susan Thomas, DEC Karlsruhe, Germany
                Hans Toetenel, Delft University, Netherlands

Apologies for absence were received from P.Froome and M.Naftalin.

1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda distributed by K.de Vriendt was adopted unchanged.

2. Report from organisers of VDM'90

H. Langmaack reported as chairman of the organising committee.

The attendance had been about 100 plus 20 students for the tutorials (an increase of 100%), and 137 plus 20 students for the symposium (an increase of 50%). Income was about DM140,000, and expenditure about DM99,000, giving a surplus of DM40,146.90 to the VDM-Europe account.

S.Prehn thanked the organising committee on behalf of VDM-Europe for the excellent organisation of the conference.

3. Report from programme chair of VDM'90

D.Bjørner reported that the conference programme had been a success. There had been more orientation towards practitioners than previously, in particular in the tutorials and tool demonstrators, which had favourably impressed attenders. He concluded that this orientation should continue in future, but not at the expense of the theoretical side; this discussion was continued under agenda item 8.

4. Assessment of VDM'90

The meeting agreed with D.Bjørner's assessment that VDM'90 had been a success. S.Prehn expressed VDM-Europe's thanks to the Programme Committee and its Chairman for a very splendid and successful job. The VDM split was about equal for papers and 2 to 1 for attenders.

5. Report from BSI/VDM committee.

D.Andrews reported on the BSI standardisation effort. The Panel (BSI IST/5/19 : VDM-SL) was meeting about very 6 weeks, and was currently concerned with the static and the dynamic

semantics. The dynamic semantics had been reviewed in detail over 2 days at an extended meeting earlier in the week, and it was planned to have the final version by the end of the year. A similar review of the static semantics was planned for October, a timetable for finishing the static semantics was being planned. It was hoped to prepare an ISO Committee Draft during the first half of 1991.

VDM-SL standardization had been accepted as a New Work Item by ISO/IEC JTC1, and the first meeting of the working group SC22/WG19) would be held conjoined to a VDM-Europe meeting in 1991 [see item 9]. British and international standardization would run in parallel.

It was noted that standard VDM-SL and RSL would be in competition to some extent, but that this was beneficial rather than otherwise.

It was agreed to add a permanent agenda item for future VDM-Europe meetings : technical matters from the BSI VDM-SL Panel.

6. Brief from the CEC on the future of VDM-Europe.

K.de Vriendt made some observations on the present position and future of VDM-Europe, noting that he was not speaking officially for the CEC.

VDM-Europe was now some 6 years old. Its original goal was to make formal methods acceptable to industry. He felt that VDM-Europe had been very successful in bringing the VDM community together, but less successful in influencing industry at large. Steps to amend this might include changing the pattern of meetings to address a wider audience; making more effort to establish the Newsletter; finding better ways to disseminate the useful information that had been gathered in tools; setting up special task groups for particular tasks; perhaps making the symposium 2-track to cater for both practitioners and theoreticians.

The bringing of Z into VDM'90 also posed the question as to whether VDM-Europe should widen its scope (and perhaps change its name appropriately).

7. Discussion of overall future goals and shorter term activities.

K.de Vriendt's briefing led to an extended discussion of the future scope of VDM Europe and its activities. It was agreed that changes were needed to reach industry more effectively, but equally that the bringing together of the VDM community was of great value and must not be jeopardized. There was general agreement also that the scope should be widened to include other model-based methods, in the absence of representatives of those other formal methods it was felt that no binding decision could be taken.

The broad outline for VDM-Europe in future was proposed as follows.

There should be an administrative board, and any number of permanent or temporary task groups both technical and non-technical, examples being: symposia, technical days, newsletter (permanent); standardization, education, training, type models, proof systems, proselytization in industry, comparative methodology (temporary).

The scope should be widened gradually to include VDM, RAISE, Metasoft, Z, and B; these could have their own special task groups.

Meetings would include: annual plenary meetings; sesquiannual symposia; technical days twice or three times a year; task group meetings as required, probably about twice yearly. The technical days would be devoted to specific topics of interest to industry, and could move around Europe.

It was agreed to decide on the future form and activities of VDM-Europe at the next meeting. In the meantime K.de Vriendt would call a special meeting, including representatives of the other methods mentioned above as well as VDM, to discuss this proposal and, it was hoped, to involve those communities in the decision.

It was agreed after some discussion to proceed at present with VDM'91 as planned, though this also could be discussed at the next meeting.

S.Prehn said that he wished to stand down as Chairman; that J.Dawes also wished to stand down as Secretary; and that it was appropriate to elect a Treasurer from the forthcoming symposium. Accordingly he proposed elections for all 3 posts at the next meeting and invited nominations.

T.Denvir was proposed as Secretary and indicated his willingness to stand for election.

8. Discussion and planning of VDM'91.

D.Bjørner reported progress so far. The proposed symposium title was: VDM'91 - Software Development Methods, with the main themes: from specifications to code, design calculi, data verification, program transformation, fitting formal methods into overall development, and engineering tools.

The proceedings would be published in 2 volumes: invited and submitted papers; and tutorials, project reports, and company profiles, with a summary of VDM. A 2-track format was being considered for the symposium (practical and theoretical) and possibly for the tutorials (introductory and advanced); suggestions for a full day introductory tutorial were invited.

It was hoped to include more project reports (records of industrial experience of the use of formal methods) and company profiles (aims and methods) of companies active in formal methods consultancy, as well as tool reports; the Call for Papers would invite these.

A small executive programme committee was proposed, plus a larger group of referees. It was agreed that the latter could submit papers but the former could not; this would be stated in the call for papers, which would include the names of the executive programme committee only.

The executive programme committee would be responsible for nominating referees, and in particular for ensuring that other methods than VDM were covered. Nominations were to be sent to H.Toetenel and S.Prehn.

The following schedule was agreed.

1 October 1990. First call for papers despatched (a single sheet to be sent to the academic community, suitable for e-mail)

1 November 1990. Second call for papers despatched (a full printed call for papers with symposium details, suitable for industry).

Both calls would be mailed by the CEC.

1 March 1991 Deadline for submission of papers.

11 March 1991 Executive programme committee meeting for paper distribution.

31 May 1991 Executive programme committee meeting for paper selection.

17 June 1991 Notification of acceptance or rejection of papers.

16 August 1991 Deadline for production of camera-ready copies of papers.

21-15 October 1991 VDM'91 symposium.

H. Toetenel reported from the Organizing Committee. Delft itself was unsuitable, having few hotels and much traffic; the committee had chosen Leeuwenhorst, a self-contained conference centre at Noordwijkerhaut on the coast, near Leyden.

A logo (based on a Mondrian painting) was proposed and accepted.

Special responsibilities within the Organizing Committee were: N.Plat for tools and software development environment; P.Behm for industrial experience and company profiles.

9.Planning of future meetings

The next meeting will be on Thursday 17 January 1991, in Brussels. The future organization and scope of VDM-Europe will be discussed, based on a prepared proposal.

The meeting after next will be on Thursday 18 April 1991, in Brussels, preceded on Wednesday 17 April 1991 by the inaugural meeting of the VDM-SL Working Group, ISO / IEC JTC1 / SC22 / WG19.