

Congress Report

15th TRIENNIAL WORLD CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AUTOMATIC CONTROL (IFAC), BARCELONA, SPAIN, 21st–26th JULY, 2002

The World Congress under the Spanish presidency (Prof. P. Albertos) brought together about 2000 researchers and practitioners of control theory, technology and applications. The famous Gran Teatro del Liceo of Barcelona was the right location for the opening ceremony, whereas the congress sessions were held at the campus of the Universidad Politecnica de Catalunya.

Plenary and survey lectures demonstrated the state of the theory and application of automatic control. Milestone Reports of the different strands in IFAC informed on current research and its applications in the industrial practice.

The congress was divided into nine parts as arranged by the Coordinating Committees of IFAC. The 240 sessions with almost six contributions in each were assigned to three themes: scientific, industrial and social. While most of the contributions discussed developments in control theory and control system design for industrial applications, the social aspects of these developments (acceptance, usability, human machine interaction, ethics, responsibility) were recognized as an integral part in Automatic Control. The design of control systems should consider the human skills and capabilities extensively.

A panel discussion on future directions of Automatic Control named Learning Systems, Energy based Control, Autonomous Vehicles, Control of Biomedical Systems and Mechatronics as a challenging interdisciplinary research aim. The meeting of the Technical Board confirmed a new structure, viz. Theory, Technology and Applications, to make IFAC more transparent and competitive. More information can be found on the home page of IFAC: <http://www.ifac-control.org>.

The congress was well organized and very informative not only with the lectures and contributions within the sessions but also with formal and informal meetings of the different Technical Committees considering future directions and challenges in Automatic Control.

The closing ceremony, after handing over the awards to young researches and to researchers of outstanding merits, ended with the announcement of the 16th Triennial World Congress to be held in Prague under the Czech presidency (Prof. V. Kucera).

All the material is available from Elsevier Science Ltd, Oxford (<http://www.elsevier.com/locate/ifac>)

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