

## ESF RESEARCH CONFERENCES

### Rapporteur Report

<b>Partnership:</b>	
<b>Conference Title:</b>	Analysis and Combinatorics in Spatial Probability
<b>Dates:</b>	2010-12-12 to 17
<b>Chair:</b>	
<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Omer Angel

#### General Comments

Any general comments you might have concerning the conference, your role, the scientific area covered by this conference, etc.

The meeting was very well organized. The many presentations were at the highest level, describing exciting new innovations and progress. The schedule was fairly well thought out, with ample time for informal discussions. There was generally sufficient time for questions and discussion after the talks. One exception is that two of the meeting's days were quite long: 9:20 to 19:00, which I expected to be quite tiring. However, the short talk sessions in the afternoons proved quite suitable for such long days.

Participants were a diverse group, including leading probabilists from both within and outside Europe, as well as many young people in the field. Overall the meeting was both enjoyable and productive, and I look forward to future ESF workshops in the area.

#### Quality of Scientific Programme, Presentations and Discussion

[Omer Angel], [2010-12-19]

Comments on the balance and scope of the scientific programme, the scientific quality of the presentations and discussions.

The programme was well balanced, including a diverse collection of topics related to analysis and combinatorics within probability. Scientifically, the programme was of the highest class. Presentations discussed some of the most exciting new advances. Several themes emerged in the meeting. Some were organized in sessions (e.g., a half day dedicated to random planar maps); others were more spread out, with multiple talks about (for example) self interacting random walks, or the interchange process (random stirring).

As noted above, two of the workshop days were quite busy, though these days too had sufficient breaks. The free afternoon was also useful for additional discussion.

### **Informal Networking and Exchange; Atmosphere**

Was the schedule and the atmosphere conducive to an easy exchange of information? Was there time and space for an informal discussion? Were younger researchers integrated?

The atmosphere of the meeting was very comfortable, there was usually sufficient time for discussion of the presentations as they ended, both with all participants and privately. There were sufficient breaks between talks to allow discussions among participants. Since lunch was catered on most days, and breakfast was served at the hotel, participants also had many occasions for discussions over meals, including also the conference dinner and unofficial dinners.

Young participants were fully integrated, and in fact were a crucial part of the program. A large number of talks were given by graduate students and post-docs, including both short and full length talks. The conference would not have been as successful without these.

### **Balance of Participants**

Was there an appropriate balance between young and senior participants? Was a balance of national groups and researchers from different (sub)fields achieved?

The meeting included presentations from researchers at all stages of their career. There were two afternoon sessions of short talks, primarily by graduate students. However, there was also a significant representation of senior probabilists at the height of their career. (E.g. Monday featured the younger Beffara, Peled and Richthammer and the senior Pemantle, Peres and Kumagai).

There was significant representation from many different countries. Talks were diverse, and presented a large variety of topics within the area.

### **Outlook and Future Developments**

Will new collaborations emerge from this conference? (How) could the conference outcomes be utilized further? Are there suitable (ESF) programmes or instruments to further the work of the conference?

In light of the many discussions among participants that I both witnessed and took part in during the conference, I have no doubt that many collaborations have either started or been advanced over the week of the conference. Just from my random discussions I learned of new collaborations among, Kozma and Richthammer, Duminil-Copin, Peled and Richthammer. Certainly there are many others.

### **Follow-up**

What immediate and long term follow-up would benefit collaborations and dialogues that may have begun at the conference?

I am not aware of ESF or other programmes that would particularly further the work of the conference.

Any programme that facilitates collaboration between individuals at different locations will have this effect, both for projects started at this meeting and others.

### **Organisation and Infrastructure**

Were venue, catering and accommodation appropriate for this conference? Were participants satisfied with the on-site administration and support?

TU Eindhoven and Eurandom were a very suitable venue for the meeting. The lecture rooms were slightly too small given the number of participants. There were many other sitting areas in the building which were useful for independent discussions.

The poster session included a number of interesting presentations. Unfortunately, it was held at Eurandom, while on most days the talks were held in another building, so the posters were not easily accessible on most days.

The catered lunches were adequate, as was the hotel where most participants stayed. The hotel breakfast provided additional opportunity for discussions.

I was very satisfied with the local administration and support. As far as I know so were other participants.

### **Summary & Overall Assessment**

Was the conference successful; were its aims achieved?

In my opinion the conference was a clear success. Others whom I have spoken with during and shortly after the meeting also shared this feeling. Many new and exciting developments in spatial random systems were presented and discussed. Discussions between participants were prevalent and will certainly lead to further advances in the area in the future.

There was generally sufficient time for questions and discussion after the talks. Two of the meeting's days were quite long: 9:20 to 19:00, which I expected to be quite tiring. However, the short talk sessions in the

afternoons proved quite suitable for such long days.

Overall the meeting was both enjoyable and productive, and I look forward to future ESF workshops in the area.

## About ESF Research Conferences

### **The Scheme**

This conference is part of the European Science Foundation's (ESF) Research Conferences Scheme. The Scheme aims to promote scientific excellence and frontier level research throughout Europe and the rest of the world. Conferences aim to provide leading scientists and other participants, including young researchers, with a platform to present their work, to discuss the most recent developments in their fields of research and to network.

### **Conference Format**

The core activities should be based on lectures by invited speakers, who are leaders in their respective fields, followed by extensive discussion periods. An informal exchange of ideas, both inside and outside the lecture room, should be encouraged, and the number of sessions in the daily timetable should be limited in order to allow sufficient time for interaction between the participants. Time should be reserved for a 'Forward Look Plenary Discussion' about future developments in the field.

Participants can take all their meals together to encourage further contact and networking, which can be particularly beneficial to younger researchers who may be less outspoken in the formal lecture room setting. In order to gain optimum benefit from the conference, both the speakers and the participants are asked to stay for the whole duration.

### **Division of Tasks**

The Conference Chair is responsible for ensuring the quality of the scientific programme through the selection and invitation of speakers, and through the selection of participants.

The ESF Conferences Unit is responsible for managing all the logistical aspects of the conference organisation, including the provision of an on-site secretariat.

Further information: [www.esf.org/conferences](http://www.esf.org/conferences)