

European Conferences

These notes are intended to help those involved in the planning and running of the European Conferences held under the auspices of the EUROMECH Council. These Conferences are broad in scientific scope, are open to all those interested, and are expected to have a number of participants between 150 and 600. The present series of European Conferences comprises:

- the European Solid Mechanics Conference (ESMC)
- the European Fluid Mechanics Conference (EFMC)
- the European Turbulence Conference (ETC)
- the European Nonlinear Oscillations Conference (ENOC)
- the European Mechanics of Materials Conference (EMMC)

The Purpose of European Conferences

The general purpose is to provide opportunities for scientists and engineers from all of Europe to meet and to discuss current research. Europe is a very compact geographical region, well provided with conference facilities, and this makes it feasible to hold inexpensive meetings.

The fact that the European Conferences are organized by Europeans primarily for the benefit of Europeans should be kept in mind. Qualified scientists from any country are of course welcome as participants, but the need to improve communications within Europe is relevant to the scientific programme and to the choice of leading speakers.

A European Conference on a broad subject, such as the ESMC or the EFMC, is not a gathering of specialists all having the same research interests, and much of the communication which takes place is necessarily more in the nature of the imparting of information than the exchange of the latest ideas. A participant should leave a Conference knowing more and understanding more than on arrival, and much of that gain may not be directly related to the scientist's current research. It is very important therefore that the speakers at a Conference should have the ability to make ideas clear and interesting and should select and prepare their material with this expository purpose in mind.

Organizational Structure

The EUROMECH Council delegates responsibility for the general planning and supervision of each series of Conferences to a Standing Conference Committee (SCC). Presently these are:

www.euomech.org

PRESIDENT
Patrick Huerre
huerre@ladhyx.polytechnique.fr

VICE PRESIDENT
Hans-Hermann Fernholz
fernholz@pi.tu-berlin.de

SECRETARY GENERAL
Bernhard A. Schrefler
CISM International Centre for
Mechanical Sciences
Palazzo del Torso
Piazza Garibaldi 18
33100 Udine, Italy
bas@dic.unipd.it

TREASURER
Wolfgang Schröder
office@aia.rwth-aachen.de

- the European Solid Mechanics Conference Committee (ESMCC)
- the European Fluid Mechanics Conference Committee (EFMCC)
- the European Turbulence Conference Committee (ETCC)
- the European Nonlinear Oscillations Conference Committee (ENOC)
- the European Mechanics of Materials Conference Committee (EMMCC)

Appointments to these Committees are made by the EUROMECH Council, and there is normally some common membership with the Council.

For the ESMC and ENOC, which normally take place at intervals of three years, there are ten members of each SCC. Each member is appointed for a term of about two conference periods. One of these members is appointed Chairperson and during such a period he or she is normally also invited to a meeting of the Council. One or two elected members of the Council are normally among the ten members of each SCC. Five members are replaced after each Conference.

For the ETC and EFMC, which normally takes place at intervals of two years, there are nine members of the SCC. Each member is appointed for a term of about three conference periods. One of these members is appointed Chairperson and during such a period he or she is normally also invited to a meeting of the Council. One or two elected members of the Council are normally among the nine members of each SCC. Three members are replaced after each Conference.

For the EMMC, which normally takes place annually, there are nine members of the SCC. Each member is appointed for a term of about six conference periods. One of these members is appointed Chairperson and during such periods he or she is normally also invited to a meeting of the Council. One or two elected members of the Council are normally among the nine members of each SCC. Three members are replaced after each interval of two Conference periods.

The detailed organizational work for a European Conference is carried out by a Local Organizing Committee (LOC), the Chairperson of which will be appointed at an early stage by the appropriate SCC. The preparation of the scientific programme is the responsibility of the SCC, in consultation with the LOC.

There are thus three tiers to the organization of a Conference: (i) the EUROMECH Council, which carries the ultimate responsibility and whose role when things are running smoothly is largely to receive reports on developments and to make new appointments; (ii) the appropriate SCC, which is the generator of ideas and is the primary decision-taking body; and (iii) the LOC, which implements the plans of the SCC and makes the practical arrangements for one Conference.

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Finance

Each Conference must be entirely self-supporting financially. It will be the responsibility of the LOC to cover the expense of a Conference by seeking subventions from local and national sources and by levying a registration fee on participants. It is a long-standing principle of EUROMECH that the costs should be kept low, and that the attendance of young scientists should be facilitated.

The chairperson should inform all participants that membership is expected in order to register for the conference. Non-EUROMECH members who wish to participate automatically become members for one year when they register for the conference, as specified in the standard EUROMECH event registration form. A copy of the EUROMECH event registration form can be downloaded from the EUROMECH website (www.euromech.org).

Conference organizers are required to be members of EUROMECH. As such, they have online access to the list of members of the society and they may readily check the membership status of prospective conference delegates.

The full registration fee should include three units of the annual subscription (=24 €) for each participant who is not a member of EUROMECH. This is additional to the amount which the Chairperson charges in order to cover local costs, and is to be paid by the Chairperson to the Treasurer of EUROMECH within one month of the end of the Conference. The two categories of registration fee should be indicated as follows: (I) The full registration fee and (II) the reduced registration fee for individual and joint members of EUROMECH. All members of EUROMECH should identify themselves as such at the registration desks. The membership will entitle them to a reduced registration fee, which does not include the three units (24 €) mentioned.

Financial considerations should be kept in mind when the location of a future European Conference is being considered. Experience with over 500 EUROMECH Colloquia has shown that modest accommodation and simple arrangements are not incompatible with enjoyment of both the scientific discussions and the après-conference.

Additional financial support may be sought from the European Science Foundation, via their research conference program (<http://www.esf.org/activities/esf-conferences.html>).

Participation and the Scientific Programme

Forthcoming European Conferences will be announced by leaflets, posters, notices in journals, and extensive publicity in the EUROMECH Newsletter. The form of the announcement should be agreed by the Chairpersons of the LOC and the SCC. An early first announcement, at least 18 months before the conference, is desirable. The announcement should say that anyone wishing to have further information with a

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view to taking part in the Conference should notify the LOC. The number of separate postal communications to participants should be kept to a minimum. Email should be used from the start for speed, simplicity and cheapness. There is no need for any restriction on the number of participants except that arising from the capacity of the available lecture rooms.

The duration of a ESMC or EFMC should be about five days, while that of an ETC, ENOC or EMMC should be three or four days.

Invited lectures form a very important part of the programme of a European Conference. In principle they should be understandable and interesting to all participants, and so should all be given in plenary session. If the lectures are well chosen, as many as two invited lectures per day may be contemplated. The SCC will wish to identify areas in which a clear exposition of recent developments would be especially valuable, and to match up timely topics with lecturers of known quality. The Chairperson of the SCC should issue the invitations to lecturers and should make known any wishes or suggestions the SCC may have concerning subject matter.

Those who wish to present their research activity at the Conference should be asked to submit an abstract about the work to the LOC, before a specified date. This date should be as late as possible, say three to five months before the Conference, in order to encourage participants to present the results of recent work. Taking into account the number, quality and subject matter of these submissions, the SCC and the LOC together will decide which of these submissions will be presented at the Conference, whether some of those accepted should be presented in poster form, whether and how the papers for oral presentation should be grouped in parallel sessions, and, perhaps the most important question, what time should be allowed for each oral presentation. There is no acknowledged 'right' way of incorporating offered papers into the programme of a Conference, and the EUROMECH Council is happy to see new ideas tried out. In all cases, a booklet of the accepted abstracts should be given to participants on arrival at the Conference.

The remaining ingredient in the programme is open discussion. There should of course be time for questions or comments at the end of each lecture and orally presented paper. Consideration should also be given to the inclusion of a period for discussion of a group of the posters, or of some topic which has aroused particular interest during the Conference, or perhaps of some topic specified in advance. At any period of open discussion the role of the Chairperson is very important, and that should be kept in mind when appointing the Session Chairpersons of the Conference. In this regard it is vital that each Session Chairperson should know what flexibility exists in the timetable and should be prepared to ensure that these bounds are not exceeded.

Proceedings

It is a well-known paradox that although few scientists appear to favour publication of the proceedings of a Conference, proceedings are almost always published. In the case of European Conferences, the EUROMECH Council sees no necessity for publication of proceedings. In general, participants should be encouraged to seek separate publication of their contributions in scientific journals such as the European

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Journal of Mechanics A and B. For the ESMC it has been found convenient to publish all the invited lectures in a special issue of this journal.

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