

## Preface

The Symposium on Theoretical Aspects of Computer Science (STACS) is held annually, alternating between France and Germany. The current volume constitutes the proceedings of the 16th STACS conference, organized jointly by the Special Interest Group for Theoretical Computer Science of the Gesellschaft für Informatik (GI) in Germany, and Maison de l'Informatique et des Mathématiques Discrètes (MIMD) in France.

The conference took place in Trier – the oldest town in Germany, with more than 2 millennia of history. Previous symposia of the series were held in Paris (1984), Saarbrücken (1985), Orsay (1986), Passau (1987), Bordeaux (1988), Paderborn (1989), Rouen (1990), Hamburg (1991), Cachan (1992), Würzburg (1993), Caen (1994), München (1995), Grenoble (1996), Lübeck (1997), and Paris (1998). All proceedings of the series have been published in the Lecture Notes of Computer Science series of Springer-Verlag.

STACS has become one of the most important annual meetings in Europe for the theoretical computer science community. This time, altogether 300 authors from 36 countries on five continents submitted their papers. Each submission was sent to five members of the program committee for review. During the program committee session 51 out of the 146 submissions were accepted for presentation. In two of the selected papers the same result was proved independently. The program committee decided to include the final versions of both papers in the proceedings (Icking, Klein, Langetepe: *An Optimal Competitive Strategy for Walking in Streets* and Semrau, Schuierer: *An Optimal Strategy for Searching in Unknown Streets*) and to have the result presented in a joint talk during the conference. The program committee was impressed by the high scientific quality of the submissions as well as the broad spectrum of topics they covered within the area of theoretical computer science. In spite of this a number of good papers submitted had to be rejected due to general limitations of the conference.

The program committee consisted of S. Albers (Saarbrücken), R. Amadio (Marseille), R. Cori (Bordeaux), J. Esparza (München), J. Hromkovič (Aachen), C. Kenyon (Paris), J. Köbler (Ulm), D. Krizanc (Ottawa), Ch. Meinel (Trier, chair), A. Petit (Cachan), S. Rudich (Pittsburgh), J. Sgall (Praha), R. Silvestri (Roma), S. Tison (Lille, co-chair), and P. Widmayer (Zürich). We wish to thank all the members for their work in evaluating the significance and scientific merits of the submitted papers. The program committee was assisted by numerous reviewers from all over the world whose names are listed on the next pages. We would like to thank all these scientists for their efforts. Without their voluntary work it would have been impossible to organize such a high quality conference.

We also thank the three invited speakers of this meeting for accepting our invitation and sharing with us their insights on interesting developments in our area.

We acknowledge the support of the following institutions for this conference: Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, European Commission, Institut für Telematik (Trier), and Universität Trier.

Finally, we would like to thank the members of the organizing committee consisting of J. Bern, C. Damm, Ch. Meinel, and M. Mundhenk.

Trier, February 1999

Sophie Tison and Christoph Meinel

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