

NKUA–INRIA Meeting

Athens, 12-13 May 2010

Minutes by Ioannis Z. Emiris

On May 12th and 13th, 2010, G. Giraudon, J-P. Banatre, R. Deriche, and B. Mourrain visited National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA). The purpose was to discuss means of collaboration between INRIA and NKUA (<http://en.uoa.gr/>) and, in particular, Department of Informatics and Telecommunications (DIT) (<http://www.di.uoa.gr/en/>). Here is a summary of the meeting.

Wednesday 12 May, afternoon

The discussion was organized around the following talks.

1. Prof. Sergios Theodoridis (Deputy Director of DIT) introduced the University, the Department, and its 3 Sectors: Theoretical Informatics, Software Systems, Communications & Signal processing.
2. Dr. Gerard Giraudon (Director of INRIA Sophia-Antipolis) presented INRIA and introduced the Sophia-Antipolis Center.
3. Prof. Jean-Pierre Banatre (Director of European Partnerships) discussed INRIA's European Partnership program, including existing tools (e.g. European Programs, ERCIM), newer tools (e.g. ICT Lab, Joint research teams beyond the French border), and upcoming tools (e.g. PPP's).
4. Dr. Rachid Deriche (Vice-director of the Scientific Committee of INRIA Sophia-Antipolis) described the concept of INRIA project-teams and presented the project-teams of the Sophia-Antipolis Center.
5. Prof. Dimitris Achlioptas gave an overview of the Sector of Theoretical Informatics. Sector Professors also present included Ioannis Emiris (joint projects with GALAAD, GEOMETRICA, COPRIN), Elias Koutsoupias (projects with MASCOTTE), and Angelos Kiayias.
6. Prof. Yannis Ioannidis (Head of DIT Committee on Graduate studies) gave an overview of the Data Management group Madgik within the Sector of Software Systems, including a recent project with AS-CLEPIOS, and contacts with WebDam, Paris. The Sector includes further activities, e.g. on e-government and Web services.
7. Prof. Lazaros Merakos gave an overview of the Sector of Communications and Signal Processing, with emphasis on the Communications Network Lab. The Lab Professors also present were Ioannis Stavrakakis (contacts with MAESTRO, PLANETE), and Nancy Alonistioti. Recent projects include an FP6 project on Fire Modeling with Profs L. Merakos and Elias Manolakos.
8. Prof. Dimitrios Thilikos gave an overview of the Math Department, focused on the group of Computational and Algorithmic Math, discussed his collaboration with MASCOTTE, and mentioned recent graduates who are PhD students at INRIA.

The talks by NKUA Profs are attached.

There was an additional meeting on Wednesday morning between B. Mourrain and Prof. N. Misirlis (Numerical Linear Algebra).

Thursday 13 May, morning

G. Giraudon, J-P. Banatre, and I. Emiris visited the Rector, Prof. Dimosthenis Asimakopoulos, who was very positive about this collaboration. They also discussed with Elias Marselos of the Committee on Bilateral agreements on the details of the agreement.

R. Deriche and B. Mourrain, and later the entire group, met with the following DIT members:

1. Prof. Elias Manolakos, presented the MSc on Informatics Technology in Medicine & Biology, of which he is responsible.
2. Prof. Theoharis Theoharis and Dr. Astero Provata (Researcher at “Dimokritos”), discussed image processing, graphics, and biometrics; they have contacts with R. Deriche and G. Drettakis.
3. Dr. Maria Roussou presented recent work on Virtual Reality (has collaborated with G. Drettakis).
4. Prof. Thomas Sphicopoulos, Department Director, summarized the prospects of collaboration (and mentioned contacts with Eurecom).

Conclusion

NKUA, and especially the DIT, maintains strong links with INRIA Sophia-Antipolis, and there are several complementarities. In this setting, we plan a formal relationship with INRIA Sophia-Antipolis, based on an agreement signed by the two Institutions. The agreement would focus on the following objectives:

- Exchange of academic personnel.
- Student exchange.
- Exchange of nonacademic personnel.
- Joint research activities (bilateral or within the European framework).
- Exchange of good practices (concerning, for example, joint software development or innovation practices).

More concretely, we expect the collaboration to start based on the following aspects:

- Participation of INRIA researchers in Master’s programs of DIT and/or the Math Department, e.g. through mini-courses offered by visitors or remotely. Collaboration on MSc theses is desired; one issue is to improve the communication of proposed subjects for possible Internships or other exchanges. Moreover, participation in thesis supervision (cotutelle) and PhD committees, joint organization of thematic Schools.
- Conversely, collaboration with the International MSc programs Ubinet and CompBio, especially through Greek funding expected to support such exchanges for national MSc programs.
- Joint research activities can be based on the existing tools, mainly European, such as FP7. Further tools can be either bilateral (French embassy in Athens, COLORS), regional (REGional POTential, 3+3 Méditerranée), or European (ICT Lab on KIC, PPP’s). A related question was whether ERCIM is expected to open up so as to include more than one partner per country.
- Exchange of good practices on technology transfer may start by the joint organization of Workshops on Innovation (Bar Camps).

The plan of action goes as follows:

1. Signature of the framework agreement, hopefully by summer 2010.
2. Exchange of letters between Director of INRIA Sophia-Antipolis and DIT so as to specify the ways of collaboration.
3. Visit of NKUA group at Sophia-Antipolis in Fall 2010 for scientific presentations and further organizational issues. It is expected that such meetings will be held regularly, e.g. once or twice per year.