

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EUROSIM

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Abstract

It seems from distant memories, that the first stirrings of interest in promoting collaboration between European Simulation Societies probably occurred at the Summer Computer Simulation Conference, SCSC 1986 in Reno, Nevada, where I met some other European simulationists and I became more aware of Continental European simulation activities. The author was one of a small group of simulationists who was keen to promote collaboration between the simulation societies of Europe. I subsequently took part in the ESM 88 European Simulation Environments Conf., Nice, France, in May, 1988, where I met many European simulationists. Of course, in 1988, this meant Western Europe. This led to a number of meetings of interested representatives from the then major players in Europe. In turn, this gave rise to the fledgling EUROSIM Board, subsequently formalised in terms of an agreed set of Byelaws and a set of working rules. This was formalised at the EUROSIM Board meeting and formally announced at the SCS 3rd European Simulation Congress, held at Edinburgh University in September 1989. Subsequently, this gave rise to the 1st EUROSIM Congress, held in Capri, Italy, in September, 1992 under the auspices of the Italian Society, ISCS chaired by Prof. Franco Maceri. The rest, as they say, is history.

Keywords: Eurosim, History, European Societies, Board, Congresses.

Presenting Author's biography

Richard Zobel graduated in Electrical Engineering from London University in 1963. His first experience of simulation was obtained during 1962-66 at Sperry Gyroscope whilst working on naval surface to air missiles, using mainly valve analog computers. His Ph.D., obtained in 1970 at Manchester University, concerned hybrid analog-digital computing. As Lecturer and Senior Lecturer he became involved in digital signal processing, instrumentation and design environments with special emphasis on the simulation aspects of real-time embedded systems. He is a Committee Member and former Chair of UKSim, former Secretary of EUROSIM, and was a European Director of SCSI.. He is now an independent consultant, and still very active. He is currently working with the Computer Engineering Department as a visiting academic at the Prince of Songkla University, Phuket and Hat Yai Campuses in South Thailand.



1 Introduction

It seems from distant memories, that the first stirrings of interest in promoting collaboration between European Simulation Societies probably occurred at the Summer Computer Simulation Conference, SCSC 1986 in Reno, Nevada, where the author met other European simulationists and became more aware of Continental European simulation activities. The author was one of a small group of simulationists who was keen to promote collaboration between the simulation societies of Europe. I subsequently took part in the ESM 88 European Simulation Environments Conf., Nice, France, in May, 1988, where I met many European simulationists. In 1988, this meant Western Europe, although it soon became apparent that there were long established simulation societies in the former Eastern block countries. This led to a number of meetings of interested representatives from the then major players in Western Europe. This progressed towards the concept of a federation of European simulation societies, which subsequently became known as EUROSIM. What follows is the authors recollections of the events leading up to formal foundation of EUROSIM.

2 The first meetings

The early member societies of the fledgling Board of Eurosim and their representatives were:

DBSS, Dutch Benelux Simulation Society (Belgium, The Netherlands) – Ghi Vansteenkiste, Eugene Kerckhoffs, Lenn Dekker

SIMS, Simulation Society of Scandinavia (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden) - Kaj Juslin, Esko Juuso, Peter Fritzson

ASIM, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Simulation (Austria, Germany, Switzerland). Felix Breitenecker, Ingrid Bausch-Gall, Juergen Halin

UKSIM, United Kingdom Simulation Society (Formally UKSC - UK Simulation Council of SCS) – Richard Zobel, David Murray-Smith, John Stephenson.

ISCS Italian Society for Computer Simulation – Prof. Giorgio Savastano, Franco Maceri, Giuseppe Iaziolla, Mario Savastano

Both formal and informal meetings took place from 1987 to 1992. Many of these were initially associated with Ghent University in Belgium and Prof Ghi Vansteenkiste, with some funding from the EU. This led to informal and formal meetings, in a variety of West European countries. In particular, there were meetings in Ghent, Brussel, Liege, Frascati, Menton Garavan, Capri, Copenhagen, Positano, Helsinki, etc.

At the same time many of the same people were also involved in the development of SCS Europe and its

associated ESM and ESS conferences. However, these were not necessarily seen to be in competition. This was because each European society held its own regional simulation meetings and conferences, usually in the local or regional language since each society was either language based or national.

3 EUROSIM Board meetings

These were initially informal gatherings of representatives of the original set of interested societies. We all knew each other and discussed various scenarios within which such a loose collaboration might take place, without causing problems for the local operation of any particular regional society.

One of the most demanding problems was that concerning the establishment of a set of rules under which EUROSIM would operate. This became a protracted discussion with many problems, particularly those concerned with the exact meaning of the proposed rules as understood after translation into the regional society language.

The Board came to an early decision on its constitution, with Lenn Dekker as Chairman, Richard Zobel as Secretary to the Board, Marja Dekker as Minute Secretary, and that each member society would have a nominated representative on the Board. It further decided that EUROSIM should in due course have a major Congress every 3 years.

3.1 EUROSIM bye laws

These were proposed, reviewed, revised, edited, updated endlessly. Richard Zobel, as the only native English speaker, was given the unenviable task of refining the byelaws using a form of words understandable and acceptable to each member society and its regional language.

3.2 Byelaws and working rules

Subsequently, it was decided that there should be a set of byelaws, established under international law, and a second set of working rules for day-to-day running of EUROSIM.

Initially, the byelaws of EUROSIM were to be established as a charity in Belgium. However, this would have taken some two years to establish under Belgian law, which meant that the intended first EUROSIM Congress, proposed to be held in Capri Italy and the chairmanship of Prof. Savastano (Chairman of ISCS) would have to be delayed.

It was then decided to register EUROSIM in Italy. This was successful, but required an official translation into English for all of the member societies, current and future.

A set of working rules was also established, and the plans laid to hold the first EUROSIM Congress in Capri, Italy in September 1992. Regrettably, Professor

Savastano died, and his chairmanship was taken over by Prof. Franco Maceri.

3.3 SCS, UKSC and UKSim

SCS, the Society for Computer Simulation International was continually informed and updated on the developments related to the fledgling EUROSIM as the author was, at that time also a Director-at-Large on the Board of SCS. UKSC was the UK Regional Council of SCS and had been since its inception in the 1960's. It was agreed at an annual SCS Board meeting, that UKSC could become independent, of SCS, subject to it agreeing to continue to look after its SCS members and to collaborate with SCS. Subsequently, in 1997, UKSC became UKSim and could then legally be a member society of EUROSIM. A typical SCS Board meeting is shown in Figure 1.



Fig. 1 SCS Board meeting

4 Some notable Eurosim Board meetings

There were many meetings in a variety of venues. Of course, the details are not of any great interest. However, there were some notable events which are worth recording, if only to illustrate the necessity of adding the hilarious and ludicrous to the important but inevitable mundane activities of such international committee meetings.

4.1 The Board meeting in Menton Garavan

The meeting took place in a small private hotel, shown in figure 2. Margaret and I arrived in Nice airport late evening and bypassed passport control and customs because there was no-one there and obviously no flight arrival was expected. We took the bus to Nice and then needed a taxi to go to the train station. We met two large American ladies who were going to the Negresco hotel and we shared a taxi. The driver's knowledge of English was so poor that he could not distinguish our different accents and thought that we were all together! It is not easy to fool a Nice taxi driver! On arrival at the station it was already past midnight. However, we found the small hotel, but it was all in darkness and the reception was closed. We went back to the entrance and then heard a voice from above. It was Marja Dekker, who called "Try pushing

the door!". We went in to be met by Lenn Dekker in his pyjamas and dressing gown who gave us our key.



Fig. 2 Hotel in Menton Garavan

In our room we discovered that there as no minibar or even drinking water and we were desperate. Then we heard voices on the veranda and discovered that next door veranda was occupied by Felix Breitenecker and the representative from Elsevier. We joined them for some red wine.



Fig. 3 Eurosim Board meeting in Menton Garavan

The meetings the following day were very pleasant and productive, enhanced by the ever stronger smell of the roast beef and garlic of the forthcoming splendid lunch. A photograph from the meeting is shown in figure 3.

4.2 The Board meeting in Liege

This was notable in the sense that it was attended by the fledgling French speaking society which became FRANCOSIM. It had become clear that there were many simulationists in France, the East of Belgium, the West of Switzerland and other French speaking areas of Europe and other parts of the world.

After the Board meeting on the first day, there was a get-together of the French speaking representatives present in the famous bar in Liege which has 900 beers. I believe that these comprise 50 draft beers, 50 foreign beers and 800 Belgian bottled beers. The tables and benches are very old and made of thick, time-worn timbers. Each sitting place has a menu – for beer, not for food. The food menu was on a board. Both were very good and I enjoyed the beer, the food and company. This was the origin of the foundation of Francosim.

4.3 The Board meeting in Capri

This was one of the most hilarious situations I have ever experienced. The meeting took place in a hotel room and was properly organized and constituted. However, the meeting coincided with the world cup football competition. This meant a ban on sales and consumption of alcohol during the period before, during and after the matches. Lunch was the traditional Italian extended event and wine continued to flow after the alcohol ban deadline. We returned to our meeting which concluded around 17.30 after which Lenn and Marja Dekker, Juergen Halin and myself went in search of a beer. All of the bars had a sign in English saying “No Alcohol”. However, we continued up to the square, with the famous clock. Here, the three bars, usually completely full, were almost empty, but a few people were seated and appeared to be drinking beer, so we sat down and shortly after, we were served our requested beers.

Then the police arrived. They looked at us and immediately went to the bar to talk to the staff who were watching Italy playing Ireland on a portable TV. There was some animated remonstrance concerning our beer consumption. Suddenly, there was a shout and a roar, all the dogs started barking – Italy had scored! Shortly after the police officers appeared to be enjoying a drink and nothing further was said to us.

Later that evening, we all congregated together with colleagues from the University of Naples for a splendid meal in a very nice seafood restaurant where the white wine was served in bottles of aqua minerale!

4.4 The official formation of EUROSIM

The Board meetings culminated in the lively EUROSIM Board meeting, chaired by Prof. Lenn Dekker, immediately prior to the SCS European Simulation Congress in Edinburgh, September 1989. During that Board meeting there were some robust discussions between representatives of the various

European Simulation Societies. This led to the discussion of several competing proposals for establishing EUROSIM. Happily, this ultimately led to the agreement to establish EUROSIM with all of the Societies present included and represented on the newly formed official EUROSIM Board, with the further proposal to consider applications from other European societies, particularly those from the central and eastern parts of Europe.

Later that evening, at the SCS Congress Dinner, I was asked to formally announce the establishment of EUROSIM with a short speech, of the cuff with no time for preparation. In anticipation of this momentous event, Prof. David Murray-Smith produced a magnificent EUROSIM umbrella as a symbol of the EUROSIM umbrella organization of European Simulation societies (figure 4). Some 256 European simulationists attended the dinner at which this auspicious event took place.

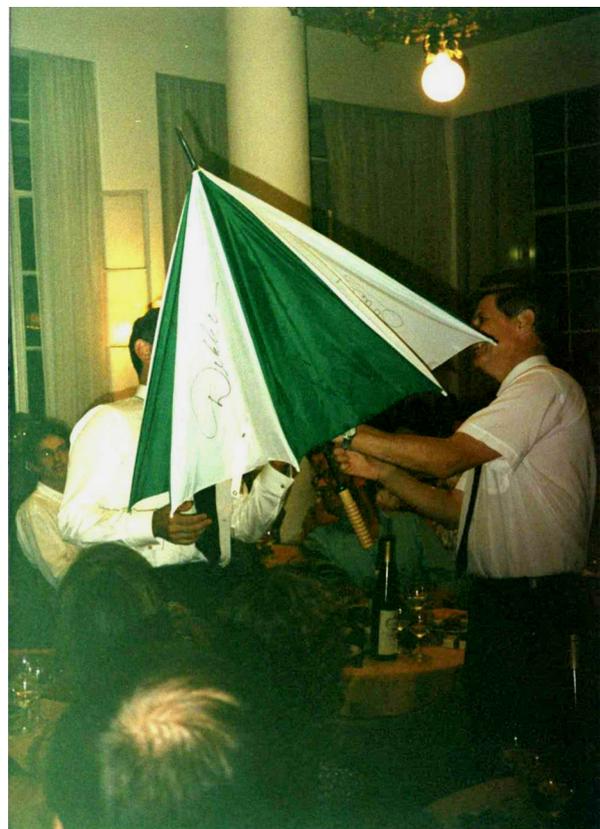


Fig. 4. The EUROSIM umbrella, Edinburgh 1989.

Figure 5 shows the second EUROSIM President, Prof. Felix Breitenecker at the EUROSIM Congress, held in 1995 in Vienna, Austria, handing over the updated umbrella to Dr. Kai Juslin, VTT, the succeeding president who subsequently organized the third EUROSIM congress in 1998 at the Technical University of Helsinki, Espoo, Finland. The Helsinki event was held in the late Winter with much snow. A few hardy delegates went on to sample the cross country skiing and dog-sledding near to Ivalo well inside the arctic circle, a very enjoyable experience.

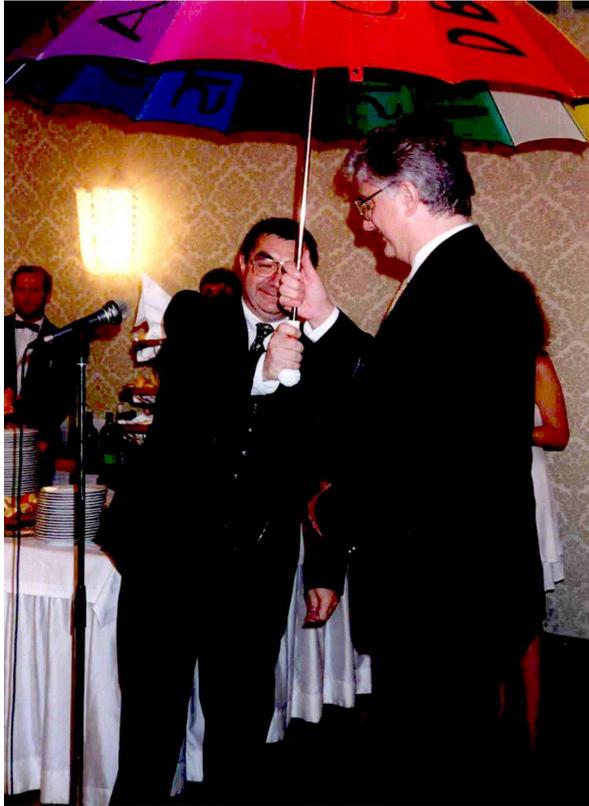


Fig. 5 Handing over of the umbrella, Vienna, 1995

4.5 Some special people

It has been my pleasure to meet some very special people in the quest for establishing EUROSIM. I am



Fig. 6. Prof. Granino Korn and Prof. Li, Bo Hu

not sure when or where the next two pictures were taken. Figure 6 shows on the left, Prof. Granino Korn, University of Arizona, who with his wife Teresa, wrote the bible of analog simulation and became a great friend to me at the Capri first congress. Also on the right is Prof. Li, Bo Hu, from BUAA, Beijing, President of CASS, he and I had exchange visits with BUAA and UKSim between China and the UK.

Figure 7 shows Milan Kotva, the late Chairman of the Czech and Slovak Simulation Society, a lovely man, a good friend and sadly missed. It was my pleasure and privilege to welcome Milan to the UKSS 93 conference, held at Keswick, September, 1993. It was his first visit to England. He was astonished that when he arrived at the boarder between Czechoslovakia and Germany, he only had to show his passport! He very much enjoyed an afternoon with us, touring parts of the beautiful Lake District, including afternoon tea with scones, strawberry jam and cream.

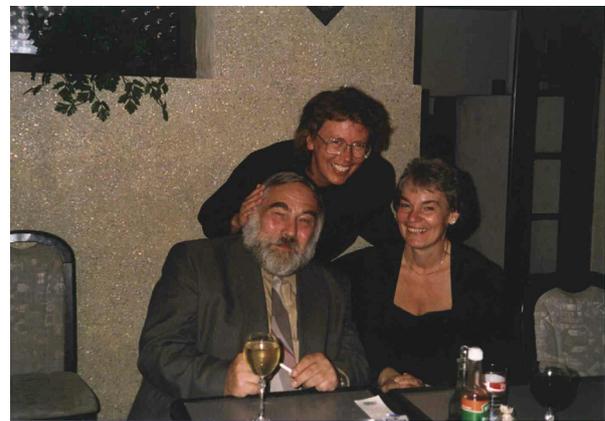


Fig. 7. Milan Kotva, former Chairman of CSSS.

5 Further development of EUROSIM

It had been decided that after the very successful first EUROSIM Congress in Capri, the new President of EUROSIM should be Prof. Felix Breiteneker, and that ASIM should organise the second EUROSIM Congress in 1995 at the Technical University of Vienna.

There were prior to the Capri congress and after this, proposals from a number of long established simulation societies in parts of Central and Eastern Europe, to join EUROSIM. For a variety of reasons including the continuing but resolving problems in the former Yugoslavia, and the lack of knowledge by many Western country simulationists of the long history of simulation societies in the former countries of the USSR, it took some time to establish the credentials of these societies.

Happily, visits by the author, Eugene Kerckhoffs and others to Czechoslovakia (as it then was), Hungary and Poland, plus visits of representatives from Croatia, Romania and Spain to West European simulation events, gradually these excellent and long established societies became fully welcomed and

accepted into the EUROSIM federation of Simulation societies.

5.1 EUROSIM and its congresses

First EUROSIM Congress was held in Capri, Italy, 29-September to 02 October 1992 under the Presidency of Prof. Franco Maceri.

The second EUROSIM Congress was held in 1995 in Vienna, Austria, under the Presidency of Prof. Felix Breitenecker, Technical University of Wien, Austria

The third EUROSIM Congress was held in 1998, under the Presidency of Dr. Kaj Juslin, VTT, Helsinki, Finland, at the Technical University of Helsinki, Espoo, Finland

The fourth EUROSIM Congress was held in 2001 under the Presidency of Prof. Len Dekker, at the Technical University of Delft, Delft, The Netherlands.

The fifth EUROSIM Congress was held in 2004 under the Presidency of Prof. Yskandar Hamam, in Paris, France.

The sixth EUROSIM Congress is/was held in 2007 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, under the Presidency of Prof. Borut Zupančič.

5.2 EUROSIM - its newer members

Subsequently, other European Simulation Societies joined EUROSIM:

CSSS - Czech and Slovak Simulation Society – Prof. Jan Stefan, Prof. Mikulaš Alexik

CROSSIM - Croatia Society for Simulation Modelling – Prof. Jadranka Božikov

HSS – Hungarian Simulation Society – Prof. Andras Javor

SLOSIM – Slovenian Simulation Society – Prof. Borut Zupančič

AES, Spanish Simulation Society – Prof. Jose-Maria Giron Sierra

ROMSIM, Romanian Society for Modelling and Simulation – Prof. Florin Stanculescu

PSCS – Polish Society for Computer Simulation – Prof. Leon Bobrowski

5.3 More recently

Originally, Simulation News Europe, SNE, was published by SCS Europe. However, after the formation of EUROSIM, it was agreed that this should become a EUROSIM publication, and this was taken on board by Felix Breitenecker, TUWien, and published in Vienna. Similarly, Lenn Dekker, TUDelft, established the Journal of Simulation Practice and Theory. Both have remained strong

publications, well supported by all of the European Simulation Societies.



Fig. 8. Piran: relaxation after the EUROSIM Board

EUROSIM Board meetings continue on a regular basis, usually held in the Country hosting the next Congress. The picture featured in Figure 8 was taken in Piran, Slovenia, after the occasion of the Board meeting in Ljubljana (23rd EUROSIM board meeting, April 2003).

6 Conclusions

For the author and all of his colleagues and friends throughout the greater Europe, the adventure of having the foresight for the proposal and concept of a European Simulation organization, subsequently to become EUROSIM, has been a journey of excitement, difficulties, promise, misunderstandings challenges and ultimately the success of creating EUROSIM.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of those who have participated in this very successful continuing European adventure, which brings us all together in our wide ranging area of modeling and simulation.

It eventually came to fruition in Edinburgh in 1989 and has happily not only continued but has blossomed since then.

The rest, as they say, is history.

7 References and citations

1. Diaries of the Author, 1986 – 2007
2. SCS Simulation News Europe
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4. Photographs taken by the author