

Liège, le 6 juillet 2012

Dear friends and colleagues of the "Structures in Fire" community,

This newsletter is first to inform those of you who could not come to Zürich in June about the outcome of the seventh international conference SiF'12.

The number of proposals that we received has again increased from the previous conference because 228 extended abstracts were sent for review. Each abstract was reviewed by three reviewers from the list of 43 who served for this conference.

Fifty papers communications have been given 20 minutes for presentation, which is only 22% of the proposed abstracts and makes our conference extremely selective. Another series of 34 papers were presented as posters while their authors were given 5 minutes to present the essential features of their paper to the delegates in two parallel sessions. These short presentations of the posters is a feature introduced for the first time in the SiF conferences and it was very much appreciated. Nevertheless, because the acceptance letters sent to the authors mentioned only the word of "poster", several authors could not get the funding for coming presenting a poster.

All 84 papers have been printed in full extend in the proceedings without any distinction between them.

The attendance was high with 178 delegates in total, coming from all over the world, with the highest delegation coming from Edinburgh as usual.

The local organisation was characterized by warm friendly attitude as well as typical Swiss efficiency and everything went perfectly, from welcome meeting party, to technical sessions, official banquet and even the weather. The proceedings of the conference can be downloaded as a pdf file on:

<http://e-collection.library.ethz.ch/view/eth:5254?q=%28author:andrea%20frangi%29>

An informal meeting was held at the end of the conference during which the delegates could express their views and suggestions for improvement of the future SiF conferences. The minutes of this meeting are reproduced as an annex to this message.

Don't forget to visit our website maintained by Paulo: [www.structuresinfire.com](http://www.structuresinfire.com) You can find interesting information such as the proceedings of previous SiF workshops and conferences. Don't hesitate to contact Paulo if you want to contribute to the web site with relevant information.

The steering committee has decided that the next SiF conference in 2014 will be organized by Tongji University in Shanghai, China. Professor G.Q. Li and the steering committee have since decided that the conference will take place from June 11 to 13. Please note these dates for yourself and help us advertising the conference. A web page dedicated to this conference will certainly be set up by G.Q. and his team.

Proposals for hosting SiF'2016 should be sent not later than one month before the start of SiF'2014. The objective is to announce the location of SiF'2016 at SiF'2014. As decided in Singapore, SiF 2016 will be held on the American continent, anywhere from the north of Alaska to Ushuaïa.

Believe it or not but we already received a proposal to host SiF'2020 in Australia.

We look forward to meet you in Shanghai.

For the steering committee

Jean-Marc Franssen

ANNEX: minutes of the closing meeting

## **Structures in Fire Conference, Zurich. 6-8 June 2012.**

### **Minutes of meeting to discuss future conferences.**

Chair: Jean-Marc Franssen

Steering Committee: Paulo Vila Real, Venkatesh Kodur, Andy Buchanan.

Organising Committee: Mario Fontana, Andrea Frangi, Erich Hugi, Markus Knobloch.

Approximately 100 delegates.

### **Summary of paper acceptance for 2012 conference:**

- 228 extended abstracts were submitted.
  - Six track leaders were appointed by the Steering Committee, and each of them invited several reviewers to join the Scientific Committee to review the papers.
  - All papers were reviewed by three reviewers.
  - 50 papers were accepted for publication and oral presentation.
  - 60 papers were accepted for publication and poster presentation (26 of these later withdrawn).
- (Full statistics are available from the Organising Committee if needed).
- The acceptance list was modified slightly to ensure only one presentation per author.

### **BRIEF SUMMARY OF VIEWS EXPRESSED:**

#### **Duration of conference**

- Discussion of three days vs four days. The reason for four days would be to keep a single stream.
- Some people from far away prefer four days (and single stream) after long travel times.
- Informal show of hands showed roughly equal support for 3 days vs 4 days.

#### **Parallel streams**

- A wide variety of views was expressed.
- Some delegates feel that the special benefit of SiF is the single stream where everyone hears everything, and there is excellent engagement between delegates.
- Some people do not want to hear everything, so they would be happy with two streams.
- Strong support for a mixed model with one stream in the mornings, two in the afternoons.
- Some design professionals in the audience prefer only one stream, to hear everything.

#### **Posters vs Oral Presentations**

- The 5 minute mini-presentations before the poster discussions have excellent support.
- Some people felt that "5 minutes plus poster" is better exposure than a "full paper".
- A single stream of poster mini-presentations had some support.
- We need to change the terminology to ensure that poster people can get funding to attend.
  - Normal Presentation = 5 minutes (with no questions) plus poster
  - Extended Presentation = 15 or 20 minutes with questions (no poster).

#### **Number of papers**

- The number of accepted papers should be increased, to avoid losing people to other conferences.
- A cut from 20 to 15 minutes and shorter breaks could allow 28 papers per day.

#### **Reviewing of papers**

- Concern expressed about poor quality reviewing.
- Some people were clearly concerned that their papers had not been accepted.
- It was suggested that reviewers be given more time to do a more thorough review.

- There is a trade-off between quick acceptance of latest results vs slower acceptance of older research.
- It was suggested that papers should be ranked and accepted group by group, not all ranked together, to give a fairer outcome.

**Future actions**

The Steering Committee will make decisions, in discussion with the host for the next conference, based on the views expressed at this meeting. The SiF community will be informed of progress.

Andy Buchanan