

Report of the IFIP WG 1.5 Business Meeting during AUTOMATA 2022

October 2022

1 Introduction

The business meeting of the IFIP Working Group 1.5 *Cellular Automata and Discrete Complex Systems* was held by videoconference on October 11, 2022 starting at 18:30 IST (15:00 CET). The participating members were: Pedro Balbi de Oliveira, Alonso Castillo Ramirez, Sukanta Das, Andreas Deutsch, Nazim Fatès, Pierre Guillon, Henryk Fukś, Luca Mariot, Andreas Malcher, Jarkko Kari, Dipanwita Roy Chowdury, Ville Salo, Georgios Sirakoulis, Ilkka Törmä, and Barbara Wolnik (part of the meeting).

Luca Manzoni participated as a guest.

Enrico Formenti, Kévin Perrot, Siamak Taati, and Guillaume Theyssier were excused.

The agenda of the meeting was the following:

- Report on the AUTOMATA 2022 workshop organization and participation.
- Standing of AUTOMATA with respect to other conference venues on CA.
- Publication model of AUTOMATA.
- Bid for AUTOMATA 2023.
- Inclusion of new members.
- Any other business.

2 Report on AUTOMATA 2022

Dipanwita Roy Chowdury, chair of AUTOMATA 2022, reported on the organization and the participation turnaround of the workshop. AUTOMATA 2022 was initially planned to be held as an in-person meeting in Kharagpur, India, with the dates moved to October because of milder climate at the venue. After the first call for papers, the number of submissions was quite low. Hence, the

deadline has been extended more than once. Despite this, in the end only three regular papers have been accepted, while three other submissions have been selected for presentation as exploratory papers (but two of them have been withdrawn, so in the end only one was presented in the exploratory track).

The original plan was to publish the proceedings in LNCS. However, due to the low number of accepted regular papers, Springer refused to publish the proceedings this year, and instead proposed to merge them with the proceedings of the next AUTOMATA edition. Among the possible causes of the few submissions received this year could be the uncertainty due to the pandemic situation during the time of the call for papers, and the coincidence that this year AUTOMATA was the last CA-related venue in chronological order, after ASCAT and ACRI. As an additional side effect, the chair and some PC members of AUTOMATA 2022 remarked that the overall quality of the submissions this year was also rather low.

Nazim Fatès brought up the issue that merging the papers of AUTOMATA 2022 with those of the next edition would delay their publication. This somehow defeats the very purpose of conference proceedings, which are supposed to be rapidly published and disseminated, contrary to slower process of the diffusion via peer-reviewed journals. A proposal is thus to informally publish the accepted regular papers, either on pre-publication repositories or on the website of the conference, while waiting for the official publication in the LNCS proceedings.

3 Standing of AUTOMATA

Nazim Fatès introduced the question whether the AUTOMATA workshop should be still held yearly, as it was done up to now, or every two years following the model of ACRI. Different issues are to be taken into consideration if a decision is made for a biennial event. First, the business meeting of the IFIP WG 1.5 should still be done once every year (therefore, separately from the AUTOMATA workshop in the years when it is not organized); second, if AUTOMATA becomes a biennial event, then it should be held in odd years, to avoid overlapping with the ACRI conference, which is organized during even years.

The most common opinion expressed during the meeting on this matter is that AUTOMATA should still be organized yearly for the time being, and possibly we should postpone the decision whether to make it biennial to the next meeting. The reason, as explained by Pedro Balbi de Oliveira and Georgios Sirakoulis, is that the low participation to AUTOMATA this year could still be an effect of the exceptional situation we have been living in the past two years for the COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, some members who participated to the ACRI conference in September also report a feeling that the CA community is not really growing. As noted by Andreas Deutsch, the pandemic might have amplified pre-existing issues in the vitality of the community, which means that there is no guarantee that the participation will “recover” to the previous level.

Regarding the position of AUTOMATA with regard to other meetings, Sukanta

Das told his experience in organizing the first edition of the ASCAT conference, which was quite encouraging from the participation perspective. His opinion is that this conference does not shadow too much the Automata workshop, as it encourages engineers and more application-oriented colleagues to send a contribution. Nazim Fatès asked Sukanta Das whether the low participation of Indian researchers to AUTOMATA was related to the difficulty of travelling to conference venues or to the high selectivity of the workshop. Sukanta Das's opinion is that both issues are present, although he is not sure what is the best way to address them.

4 Publication model of AUTOMATA

Strictly connected to the standing of the community is the question of the publication model for the papers presented in the AUTOMATA workshop. For the most recent years, the proceedings have been published in Springer's LNCS series. In the last years, a discussion in the WG started about changing the publication model to an open access venue. In particular, the proceedings of AUTOMATA 2021 were published in the OpenAccess Series in Informatics (OASIs) by Schloss Dagstuhl, while those of this year were supposed to revert to LNCS. Pierre Guillon asked whether it is still relevant to link the publication of the proceedings to the workshop itself. For instance, one alternative could be to create post-proceedings with papers selected among those presented at the workshop, or similarly organize only special issues on journals. Jarkko Kari remarked that this was the original idea of having an additional exploratory track next to the regular papers. Nazim Fatès proposed the idea of considering another type of submission to the workshop not to be included in the official proceedings, namely extended abstracts. This would not be an alternative to exploratory papers, but as an additional possibility next to them. Otherwise, as noted by Pedro Balbi de Oliveira problems may arise for researchers who need to present something more than an abstract in order to obtain funding from their institution to attend the workshop. Nazim Fatès proposed to continue this discussion over the WG mailing list.

5 Bid for AUTOMATA 2023

Luca Manzoni and Luca Mariot presented a bid for the next AUTOMATA edition. The proposal is to organize AUTOMATA 2023 in Trieste, Italy. Luca Manzoni showed several slides presenting the city and the prospective workshop venue, the University of Trieste. A tentative time line has been sketched, with deadlines for regular and exploratory papers respectively in early May and early July 2023, and notifications to the authors respectively in June and late July 2023. The proposed period for the workshop is early September 2023, due to the fact that courses in the University of Trieste start later, so it would be easier to book the rooms. Clearly, precise dates are subject to confirmation through

discussion by the WG in the coming months, although the rough timeline seems fine for all members participating in this meeting. Further information have been given concerning the structure of the workshop, the registration fee, the publication venue and the tentative organizing committee (at the moment composed of Luca Manzoni and Luca Mariot). All these details can be found in the slides of the presentation. As no one opposed the proposition, the bid is accepted, and thus AUTOMATA 2023 will be held in Trieste.

6 Inclusion of new members

Luca Mariot proposed Luca Manzoni as a new member to be included in the IFIP WG 1.5. Luca Manzoni's contribution to the field of CA is quite solid, looking at his publications in the past years, and moreover he participated to several editions of AUTOMATA. Therefore, Luca Mariot's opinion is that Luca Manzoni will be a valuable member to be added to the WG. All members participating to the meeting are in favour of this proposition. Hence, Luca Manzoni is nominated as member of the IFIP WG 1.5.

Nazim Fatès also proposed the nomination of another person, arguing his scientific contributions and standing in the CA community. However, since the nomination is proposed without this person being explicitly aware of it, it was suggested to decide this nomination to the next business meeting. This underlines the necessity to prepare the nomination process of new members ahead of the meeting.

7 Any other business

As concluding topics, Nazim Fatès made a call for different initiatives to stimulate the growth of the community and the diffusion of the work made the members of the group.

Luca Mariot and Luca Manzoni proposed the idea of coordinating a COST action proposal (<https://www.cost.eu/>) to build and strengthen the research network on CA. Luca Mariot briefly summarized to the other members what a COST action entails, how it is structured, and what kind of activities can be funded through it (mainly, training schools for PhD students and short-term scientific missions). He also suggested that, since COST actions submissions usually have a higher chance of being approved if the proposed consortium is large, it might make sense to involve also researchers from other CA communities such as ACRI, or even to enlarge the scope of the proposal to other natural computing models in addition to CA. The idea was welcomed with interest by the members participating in the meeting. Further discussion on how to setup and prepare the proposal will be continued through the WG mailing list.

With no other matters to be discussed, the meeting is ended at 20:00 IST (16:30 CET).