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Preface

The 30th Anniversary Conference on Current Trends in Theory and Practice of Computer Science, **SOFSEM 2004**, took place during January 24–30, 2004, in the Hotel VZ Měřín, located about 60 km south of Prague on the right shore of Slapská přehrada (“Slapy Dam”) in the Czech Republic.

Having transformed itself over the years from a local event to a fully international conference, the contemporary SOFSEM tries to keep the best of its winter school aspects (the high number of invited talks) together with multidisciplinary trends in computer science – this year illustrated by the selection of the following 4 tracks:

- Computer Science Theory (Track Chair: Peter Van Emde Boas)
- Database Technologies (Track Chair: Jaroslav Pokorný)
- Cognitive Technologies (Track Chair: Peter Šinčák)
- Web Technologies (Track Chair: Július Štuller)

Its aim was, as always, to promote cooperation among professionals from academia and industry working in various areas of computer science.

The 17 SOFSEM 2004 Program Committee members coming from 9 countries evaluated a record 136 submissions. After a careful review process (counting usually at least 3 reviews per paper), followed by detailed discussions at the PC meeting held on October 2–3, 2003 in Prague, Czech Republic, 59 papers were selected for presentation at the SOFSEM 2004:

- 22 contributed talks papers selected by the SOFSEM 2004 PC for publication in the Springer-Verlag LNCS proceedings volume (acceptance rate 19%), including the best paper from the Student Research Forum,
- 29 contributed talks papers that will appear in the MatFyzPress Proceedings (acceptance rate 26%),
- 9 student research forum papers (acceptance rate 38%), 8 of which will appear in the MatFyzPress proceedings.

The Springer-Verlag proceedings were completed by the 10 invited talks papers.

SOFSEM 2004 was the result of considerable effort by a number of people. It is our pleasure to express our thanks to:

- the SOFSEM Steering Committee for its general guidance,
- the SOFSEM 2004 Program Committee and additional referees who devoted an extraordinary effort to reviewing a huge number of assigned papers (on average about 24 papers per PC member),
- the Springer-Verlag LNCS Executive Editor Mr. Alfred Hofmann for his continuing trust in SOFSEM,
- Springer-Verlag for publishing the proceedings, and
- the SOFSEM 2004 Organizing Committee for a smooth preparation of the conference.

Special thanks go to:

- Hana Bílková from the Institute of Computer Science (ICS), Prague, who did an excellent job in the completion of the proceedings,
- Michal Bušta and Martin Stareček from ICS for realizing the SOFSEM 2004 web pages and a submission and review system that worked perfectly thus allowing a smooth PC session in Prague.

Finally we highly appreciate the financial support of our sponsors (ERCIM, Microsoft, Deloitte & Touche, SOFTEC Bratislava, Centrum.cz) which assisted with the invited speakers and helped the organizers to offer lower student fees.

November 11, 2003

Peter Van Emde Boas
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