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Preface

The Symposium on Theoretical Aspects of Computer Science (STACS) is held annually, alternating between France and Germany. The STACS meetings are organized jointly by the Special Interest Group for Theoretical Computer Science of the Gesellschaft für Informatik (GI) in Germany and the Maison de l'Informatique et des Mathématiques Discrètes (MIMD) in France.

STACS2001 was the 18th in this series, held in Dresden, February 15-17, 2001. Previous STACS symposia took place in Paris (1984), Saarbrücken (1985), Orsay (1986), Passau (1987), Bordeaux (1988), Paderborn (1989), Rouen (1990), Hamburg (1991), Cachan (1992), Würzburg (1993), Caen (1994), München (1995), Grenoble (1996), Lübeck (1997), Paris (1998), Trier (1999), and Lille (2000). It may be worth noting that in 2001 the symposium was held in one of the new states of reunited Germany for the first time. The proceedings of all of these symposia have been published in the Lecture Notes in Computer Science series of Springer-Verlag.

STACS has become one of the most important annual meetings in Europe for the theoretical computer science community. It covers a wide range of topics in the area of foundations of computer science: algorithms and data structures, automata and formal languages, computational and structural complexity, logic, verification, and current challenges. This year, 153 submissions were received, mostly in electronic form, from more than 30 countries, with a fair portion from non-European countries. We would like to thank Jochen Bern who designed the electronic submission procedure which performed marvelously and was of great help to the program committee. The program committee met for two days in Dresden and selected 46 out of the 153 submissions. Most of the papers were evaluated by four members of the program committee, partly with the assistance of subreferees. We thank the program committee for the thorough and careful work. Our gratitude extends to the numerous subreferees. The program committee was impressed by the high scientific quality of the submissions as well as the broad spectrum they covered. Because of the constraints imposed by the limited period of the symposium, a number of good papers could not be accepted.

We thank the three invited speakers at this symposium, Julien Cassaigne (Marseille), Martin Grohe (Chicago), and Dexter Kozen (Ithaca) for accepting our invitation to share their insights on new developments in their research areas.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the members of the *Institut für Theoretische Informatik* and to the local organizing committee who invested their time and energy to organize this conference.

We would like to acknowledge the various sources of financial support for STACS 2001, especially the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), the Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kunst des Landes Sachsen, and Freunde und Förderer der TU Dresden.

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