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Preface

Planning – formulating a course of action – and related fields like scheduling or reasoning about action have a long research tradition in AI with many researchers all over the world working in them. Judging from text sources like the *Readings in Planning*[*], it seems obvious that most of the planning research is done in the United States, but there has always been such research in Europe, too.

However, it seems that there is a communication problem among us European planning researchers: many of us are not well aware of the good work done nextdoor. There are a few national interest groups for planning (e.g., in the UK and in the FRG), resulting, to some degree, in national scenes; however, for most of us this situation is far from providing the stimulating atmosphere that seems possible when bringing together many people with different backgrounds and different experiences but with a common interest in planning.

The European Workshop on Planning (EWSP) was an attempt to provide such an atmosphere. It took place March 18–19, 1991, in GMD's Schloss Birlinghoven at Sankt Augustin near Bonn, with about 60 participants. The papers presented were selected by a programme committee; 10 of the 27 submitted papers are included in this proceedings volume.

There were actually a few more talks during the workshop than reflected by these 10 papers. The reason for that, I think, is part of our communication problem: the refereeing process showed widely different assessments of the contributions of individual papers. It is normal that referees disagree; however, the frequency and the grade of disagreement here were such that the committee decided to have a number of papers presented and discussed on which the referees disagreed considerably but which were judged to deal with interesting topics anyway. (This volume contains only papers rejected by none of their referees.)

Such differences in opinion were the more surprising as there seems to be a trend in the European planning research towards formalization of planning and action, which refutes the seemingly obvious assumption that the differences are yet another instance of a theoreticians versus practitioners squabble. There must be other reasons, and one of these might be the very lack of coherence of the European planning community.

There is a certain stress on formal planning work mirrored in the papers in this volume, which has its counterpart in a certain shortness of application work. Moreover, there are important and interesting areas related to planning that are totally missing here, e.g., plan recognition or cognitive aspects of planning. The papers submitted for and those presented at the EWSP, of which the papers in this volume are a good profile, are certainly not representative for the field of planning as a whole. But couldn't this very concentration be the germ of coherence of a *European* planning scene?

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[*] Allen, J., Hendler, J., Tate, A. (eds.): Readings in Planning. San Mateo: Morgan Kaufmann, 1990

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