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Preface

The Portuguese Conference on Artificial Intelligence has been organized, since 1985, under the auspices of the Portuguese Association for Artificial Intelligence (APPIA). Since the first conference, standards have been gradually refined, particularly since the fourth conference, when the EPIA became an international event, English being adopted as the official language.

EPIA'97, the eighth in the series, has reconfirmed the international status of the conference and the high standard of accepted papers. A total of 74 contributions were received from 13 countries. All of them were subject to a (AAAI-style) triple blind peer review. From these contributions, 24 were selected for full presentation and 9 were selected for poster presentation.

EPIA'97 could count on a highly qualified program committee, which included many internationally distinguished researchers covering a wide range of AI areas. Our special thanks go to them all and also to the reviewers, listed elsewhere in these proceedings, for their excellent hard work.

The presence of the invited lecturers Oskar Dressler, Tom Mitchell, Luís Moniz Pereira, and Francisco Varela greatly contributed to broadening the thematic spectrum of the conference. We would like to thank them for their presentations and for the written contributions included in these proceedings. We are also grateful to Pedro Barahona, Félix Costa, Yves Kodratoff, and Daniel O'Leary. Their tutorials made a significant contribution to EPIA97. We will not forget the effort made by Pavel Brazdil, Fernando Moura-Pires, Eugénio Oliveira, and Nick Jennings, who worked very hard to enrich the conference with interesting workshops.

We would also like to thank the following institutions that contributed (financially or otherwise) to the organization of this conference and to the edition of these proceedings:

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Coimbra, August 1997

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