Introduction

The European Association for Machine Translation (EAMT) has a long tradition for organising annual workshops and conferences with the purpose of bringing together people and companies with a professional interest in machine translation and other tools for translation, be it users, researchers, developers, or providers who want to follow latest developments.

The term *machine translation, MT,* is interpreted in its widest sense at the EAMT conferences. This means that MT refers not only to the original FAHQ (Fully Automatic High Quality) visions and their possible implementation, but also all kinds of other tools for translation, be it translation memory, alignment, example-based machine translation, etc.

In 2005, EAMT changed the event format from a workshop to a conference, and we believe this was an excellent decision, so since then we have been following up on this success, in 2006 and now in 2008. Workshops are useful, and we will most certainly still have workshops also in the coming years, but the conference format gave us more contributions, more international contributions, and in the end also more participants. A richer and better programme also gives better possibilities for fruitful discussions.

The fact that researchers and users with explicit needs are brought together, and the fact that there is a fair number of research presentations as well as a number of more practically oriented presentations, provide excellent opportunities for mutual feedback. It is our hope that we have been able to create an environment for interesting discussions and maybe even for the creation of new partnerships.

EAMT is deeply dependent on colleagues willing to take upon themselves the tasks of programme committee work and local organization, two tasks that have become more demanding with the change from workshop to conference.

So, before closing, I first want to thank all of the programme committee for their invaluable contribution, not least the programme committee co-chairs Walther von Hahn and John Hutchins. Secondly, I want to thank Cristina Vertan and other colleagues at the University of Hamburg for the local organization. Cristina Vertan invited us to come to Hamburg, and she has been taking care of all the practical details.

Finally: I wish all of you an excellent and enjoyable conference!

Bente Maegaard
Center for Sprogteknologi,
University of Copenhagen, Denmark
President of the EAMT

Note from Programme Co-chair

The conference has attracted a large number of submissions to give papers, and it was a difficult task to decide which should be accepted. Initially, the intension had been that all accepted papers – about half of total submissions – would be given in oral presentations. But with the large number of submissions it was decided that not all papers worthy of presentation could be fitted into the two-day schedule therefore some authors have been asked to describe their research in poster sessions. We have set aside two periods for posters, and we hope this is sufficient for all participants to present and discuss their work.

The theme of this conference was chosen in order to attract speakers who are concerned with the practical applications of MT in the European Union as well as the expected research interests. A majority of the papers dealt with "hybrid approaches" in some form, and there is an impressive range of languages (Czech, Swedish, Romance languages, Azerbaijani, Arabic, Chinese, ...). As well as our two invited speakers (Nicola Cancedda and Uwe Reinke) a number of other contributions are concerned with practical aspects of MT. The research papers are devoted both to aspects of the now dominant framework (or paradigm) of statistical machine translation, but a number of them also deal with "more traditional" rule-based methods. We hope that this mixture of approaches ands viewpoints will stimulate interesting discussions.

Walther von Hahn has been a major figure in the field of computational linguistics for many years, and has also been active in machine translation. Apart from individual research projects such as the German-Bulgarian-Romanian MT workstation, MT aspects of the semantic web, and example-based machine translation, he was a leading researcher in the German government-funded Verbmobil project. This year he is retiring, and we are very happy that this year's conference could be held in Hamburg, and that Walther has been able to participate actively in the programme committee as its chair.

John Hutchins

Local organisers:

Cristina Vertan

Walther von Hahn

Programme committee

Walther von Hahn (University of Hamburg) chair

John Hutchins, co-chair

Michael Carl (IAI Saarbrücken)

Andreas Eisele (DFKI Saarbrücken)

David Farwell (Instituciò Catalana de Recerca i Estudis, Barcelona)

Vladislav Kubon (Charles University, Prague)

Bente Maegaard (University of Copenhagen)

Sharon O'Brien (Dublin City University)

Stephen Oepen (University of Oslo, and CSLI Stanford)

Stelios Piperidis (ILSP, Athens)

Anna Sågvall Hein (University of Uppsala)

Harold Somers (University of Manchester and Dublin City University)

Gregor Thurmair (Linguatec)

Cristina Vertan (University of Hamburg)

Martin Volk (University of Zürich)

Andy Way (Dublin City University)