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František Plášil Keith G. Jeffery (Eds.)

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Series Editors

Gerhard Goos, Karlsruhe University, Germany

Juris Hartmanis, Cornell University, NY, USA

Jan van Leeuwen, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Volume Editors

František Plášil
Charles University, Department of Software Engineering
Malostranské nám. 25, 118 00 Prague, Czech Republic
E-mail: plasil@nenya.ms.mff.cuni.cz

Keith G. Jeffery
CLRC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory
Chilton, Didcot, OX11 0QX Oxfordshire, UK
E-mail: kgj@inf.rl.ac.uk

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Foreword

The SOFSEM (SOFtware SEMinar) is now being held for the 24th time. Having been transformed during the years from a local event to a fully international conference, the current SOFSEM is special in being a mix of a winter school, a conference, and an advanced workshop, each striving for multidisciplinarity in computer science. This aim is reflected in the technical program consisting of a relatively large number of invited talks, refereed papers (known as contributed papers), and refereed poster contributions. In addition, time and space for flash communications, industrial presentations, and exhibitions are provided. The program of SOFSEM usually starts with an opening talk delivered by a distinguished member of the computer science community; this year we are honored that Jan van Leeuwen has agreed to present his keynote address *Challenges in Large-Scale Distributed Systems.*

This volume constitutes the proceedings of SOFSEM'97 held in Milovy, Czech Republic, November 22–29, 1997. This year, 63 papers were submitted from 11 European countries. The selection of the 24 best papers was carried out during a one-day Program Committee (PC) meeting held in Brno. The referees had previously judged all papers according to their contribution to the state of the art, technical soundness, clarity of presentation, and adequacies of the length and bibliography. The Endowment Board (EB) supported by the Advisory Board recommended 22 invited talks focused on the following key topic areas: *Distributed and Parallel Systems, Software Engineering and Methodology, Databases and Information Systems*, and *Fundamentals.*

SOFSEM is the result of considerable effort by a number of people. It is my pleasure to record my thanks to the Advisory Board for their support, to the Endowment Board for their general guidance and enormous effort in finding excellent speakers for the invited talks, and to the Organizing Committee (OC) for making SOFSEM'97 happen. It has been an honor for me to work with the members of the Program Committee and other referees who devoted a lot of effort to reviewing the submitted papers.

My special thanks go to Keith Jeffery, the PC vice-chair, for his extremely cooperative and generous overall support and for sharing with me all his experience from serving as the PC Chair in 1996. Also, I would like to record a special credit to Mirek Bartošek for technical preparation of the proceedings. On a personal note, I am particularly grateful to Jiří Sochor, the PC secretary, who has done a tremendous job in keeping track of all the hundreds PC agenda related issues, among which, his perfect preparation of the PC meeting deserves to be especially recognized. Also, I would like to acknowledge the excellent cooperation I received from Jiří Wiedermann as EB Chair, and Jan Staudek as OC Chair.

I am very grateful to the editors of the LNCS series for their continuing trust in SOFSEM and to Springer-Verlag for publishing the proceedings. In addition, I appreciate highly the financial support of our sponsors which assisted with the invited speakers and advanced students.

Ultimately, the success of SOFSEM will be determined not only by the speakers and the committee members as the core of conference, but generally by all the attendees, who will contribute to the spirit of the conference. So I am very grateful to all of my professional colleagues who have done, and will do, their best to make SOFSEM a high-quality event. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation for having the opportunity to serve as the Program Committee Chair of SOFSEM'97 and welcome you to this event.

September 1997

František Plášil
SOFSEM'97 Program Committee Chair

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