

# Preface

This book contains 41 papers (25 long and 16 short ones) accepted and presented during the scientific track of the seventh Conference of the Italian Association for Artificial Intelligence (AI\*IA). The conference, held in Bari this year, follows those previously organized in Trento ('89), Palermo ('91), Turin ('93), Florence ('95), Rome ('97), and Bologna ('99). It is the traditional biennial appointment of Italian academic and industrial researchers working in the field of artificial intelligence and is based on talks given by international experts, presentations of scientific works, system and prototype demonstrations, tutorials, round-table discussions, and workshops on topics of interest from both a methodological and a technological point of view.

In the selection of the papers for the scientific track, the Program Committee has chosen long papers from those contributions that presented a complete work and short papers from those reporting ongoing research. The committee has enforced the rule that only original and unpublished work could be considered for inclusion in these proceedings. The papers, distributed among seven specific topics, report significant research at an international level, in various areas of Artificial Intelligence ranging from Machine Learning to Planning and Control, from Automatic Reasoning to Knowledge Representation, from Robotics to Intelligent Multiagent Systems and Natural Language Processing. The quality of the papers and the hard work of the researchers are witness to a massive research activity mainly devoted to the theoretical aspects of AI, but clearly aimed at consolidating the results that have already been achieved.

Many people contributed in different ways to the success of the conference and to this volume. First of all, the authors who continue to show their enthusiastic interest in AI research and the members of the Program Committee who efficiently handle the reviewing of the consistently high number of submitted papers. They provided three reviews for each manuscript, by relying on the support of valuable additional reviewers. The members of the organizing committee, Fiorella de Rosis, Donato Malerba, Sebastiano Pizzutilo, Giovanni Semeraro deserve my gratitude. A special thank to Berardina De Carolis, Nicola Fanizzi, and Stefano Ferilli who worked hard at solving supporting problems before and during the conference. I wish to thank the Dipartimento di Informatica of the University of Bari and the Director Carlo dell'Aquila for encouraging and sustaining us in the organization of the event. The financial support of the University of Bari, Italy, for partially covering the publication costs of this book is also gratefully acknowledged.

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