

SOGESCI-B.V.W.B.
General Assembly meeting at ULB Brussels on Thursday February 2, 2012
Annual report of activities in 2011

Dear Chairman, Dear Members of the Administration Board, Dear Members of SOGESCI-B.V.W.B.,

As each year, I will start my report by mentioning three main activities and services of our society in 2011, namely the ORBEL 25 conference, the ORBEL award 2011, and the 4OR publications.

The 25th yearly national conference of SOGESCI-B.V.W.B. ORBEL 2011 on Operations Research was held at Ghent University on Thursday 10 & Friday 11 February 2011. This edition was hosted by the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture; it was chaired by our administrators Sabine Wittevrongel and El-Houssaine Aghezzaf. Thank you to both and to the organising committee for the perfect organisation, and to the scientific committee for the high scientific level of ORBEL 25. 68 research papers on many different topics of OR were presented during 3 plenary sessions, and 4 parallel sessions with either three or four talks. Contributions came from all Belgian universities but also from Luxembourg, France and The Netherlands. There were in total 128 participants including many students who became free-of-charge members of SOGESCI-B.V.W.B. for the year 2011.

Two plenary talks were delivered by high-caliber scientists. On the first day, Dennis Huisman from The Erasmus University Rotterdam talked about optimization models for railway planning and operations; on the second day Leo Liberti of Ecole Polytechnique LIX in Paris discussed in his talk on combinatorial distance geometry as a meeting point between proteins and mathematics. The conference dinner took place in the Brasserie Pakhuis, right in the historical center of the marvelous city of Ghent. As now traditional, the winner of the ORBEL 2011 award presented his Master's Thesis during the conference, and received the 1.000 EURO award bestowed on the author of a scientifically oriented Master's thesis from Mr. Wouter Blondeel on behalf of the sponsor OM Partners. This year we had nine submissions; five were eventually presented to the award jury. Derek Verleye (UGent) supervised by El-Houssaine Aghezzaf was selected with a Master's Thesis entitled 'Modelling and optimisation of the production and distribution of drinking water at the Flemish Agency for Water Supply'. A link to the full text can be found on the website www.orbel.be. The ORBEL award rules have been somewhat adapted in 2011: because of the large number of submissions the jury is now establishing a short list before the presentations to the jury. Note that because I will soon come to retirement age I wish to be replaced from next year on by a younger member of the administration board. Please contact me, or the president, if you are interested in taking over.

During the General Assembly, which took place during the ORBEL 25 conference, all members of the administration board finishing their mandates were renewed, except for Marc Despontin, a former president, and Johan Springael, the secretary in charge; both had indicated their wish to resign.

Now a short report from Thierry Marchant, the Belgian Editor-in-chief of 4OR: on January 1, the journal started its online editorial manager (the standard system provided by Springer). Some bugs are to be expected in the first months, but Springer has a long experience with this system and everything

should run smoothly quite soon. As expected, the impact factor slightly decreased in 2011: it is now 0.690 (0.750 in 2010). The main reason is the increase of the number of PhD abstracts (23 in 2007-2008, 26 in 2008-2009) that are never cited. To solve this problem, it was decided one year ago to change the format of the PhD abstract so that Thomson-Reuters will no longer count them as papers. It took one year to publish the PhD abstracts already in the queue. From 2012 on, all PhD abstracts will have the new format: therefore the IF will probably not increase much before 2013. Volume 9 of 4OR was published during 2011. It contains 439 pages, including invited 4 surveys, 13 research papers, 2 industry papers, 13 PhD Thesis summaries (3 from Belgium), 1 erratum and 1 letter to the editors.

I now continue with other activities in 2011:

- The material for the Borsalino project developed by Gerrit Janssens and Kenneth Sörensen is now fully available and ready for a public roll out in 2012 on the ORBEL website.
- A workshop 'OR Problems and AI techniques' has been organised with the financial support of your society by Patrick De Causmaecker, our president, and Ann Nowe (VUB) at KULAK Leuven in February 2011.
- A conference in honour of Etienne Loute was organised at the occasion of his retirement by Laurence Wolsey at Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis in Brussels on 6th September 2011. We wish all the best to Etienne, president of SOGESCI-B.V.W.B. in 2002-2004, and member of the Administration Board; Etienne is still active in OR-related projects in Africa. Thank you, Etienne, for all your past and present involvement.

Additional news from EURO/IFORS in 2011:

- Fabrice Talla Nobibon has been proposed for participating to the ELAVIO 2012 conference in Vale dos Vinhedos, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, Feb. 5-10, 2012. He was ranked first by EURO among all received applications, which confirms how active OR remains in this country;
- Jan Verstichel (KaHo Sint-Lieven in Ghent) is the Belgian nominee for the EURO Summer Institute on 'Marine Logistics' to be held at Bremen/Germany in June 2012;
- Martine Labbé (ULB) member of the administration board, EURO past president, and former IFORS Vice-President of EURO has been appointed as Editor-in-Chief of the new EURO Journal of Combinatorial Optimization. Congratulations! ;
- Our president elect Yves Crama delivered the IFORS Distinguished Lecture at the INFORMS Annual Meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina, in November 2011. Congratulations!

To conclude this 2011 report I would like to thank you all for your contributions to our society, in particular Patrick De Causmaecker, the president in charge for one more year in replacement of the president elect Yves Crama on sabbatical leave; François Glineur our webmaster; Raymond Bisdorff who has volunteered to act as a particularly efficient secretary ad interim; Bernard Fortz, our treasurer and liaison officer with EURO and IFORS, now chairing ORBEL 26; Filip Van Utterbeek, hosting our meetings at the Royal Military Academy. Welcome also to Pieter Vansteenwegen, a young generation member of the board, the new secretary in charge. Finally SOGESCI-B.V.W.B. also thanks the French Community of Belgium for its financial support.

On behalf of our society I wish you all a very happy and successful year 2012!

SOGESCI B.V.W.B Activity report 2011 by Pierre Kunsch, Delegate Administrator, February 2012