

## Message from WFCS 2000 General Co-Chairmen

It is our pleasure to welcome all participants to the third IEEE International Workshop on Factory Communication Systems, and the "Invincible City" of Porto.

The WFCS series of workshops has established itself as the most prominent IEEE technical event dedicated to factory communication systems.

WFCS'2000, is co-sponsored by the IEEE Industrial Electronics Society (IEEE-IES) and the School of Engineering of the Polytechnic Institute of Porto (ISEP-IPP). The previous two workshops were held in Leysin, Switzerland, in October 1995, and Barcelona, Spain, in October 1997.

The location of WFCS'2000 in Porto is a reflection of the growing role of researches from Portugal in the areas of real-time communication systems, factory communication systems, and the Internet technologies, to mention some. It is also a reflection of the atmosphere of encouragement at the Polytechnic Institute of Porto for its researches to pursue research at the cutting edge of technology.

WFCS'2000 features an excellent technical program, which includes plenary presentations delivered by leading authority from the industry and academia. The quality of the program is a combination of quality submissions and diligent work of the members of the International Program Committee. We would like to acknowledge the contribution of all members of the Program Committee, and in particular Francisco Vasques and Guy Juanole, WFCS'2000 Program Co-Chairs. We are also fortunate to have two outstanding plenary speakers; Dr Greg Bollella of IBM (USA) and Professor Dietmar Dietrich of Technical University of Vienna (Austria). Dr. Greg Bollella will present an overview of the specification of real-time Java; Professor Dietmar Dietrich will be talking about Networked Fieldbus Systems, prospects and challenges.

The conference program also includes two sessions devoted to Industrial Practice and Experience. The selection process for these sessions has changed this year, in order to reinforce the interaction between academia and the industry.

For the first time in the workshop history, WFCS'2000 will feature two sessions on Work in Progress (WIP). The WIP papers will be, for sure, of interest to the researches from academia and industry as they address issues at the cutting edge of technology. We would like to acknowledge an excellent selection work done by WIP Co-Chairmen Thilo Sauter and Luís Almeida.

Another novum at WFCS'2000 is "hands-on" day. This day features special industry presentations on the actual application of emerging technologies in factory communication systems and industrial automation, and "hands-on" demonstrations involving industrial equipment. We trust this arrangement will provide an opportunity for more intimate interaction between the industry and academia. It should also serve as an opportunity for researchers from the academia to learn about new and relevant problems and challenges emerging from actual industrial applications.

An event of this size cannot be organised without the co-operation of a large number of people. First of all we thank to the Program Co-Chairs, Francisco Vasques and Guy Juanole, for selecting an excellent program committee, organising and following a rigorous paper selection criteria, and putting together an excellent technical program. We also thank to the program committee members for their time and efforts. The WIP sessions would not be possible without the effort of Luís Almeida and Thilo Sauter. Filipe Pacheco worked hard to publicise the event and Luís Miguel Pinho made sure that the conference proceedings were available on time. Mário Alves was irreplaceable in helping setting up the "hands-on" day and the industrial exhibition. He has also done a tremendous job in managing the registration process, and was always available in emergency situations. Luís Lino Ferreira managed the finances, and Berta Batista did an excellent job managing local arrangements. Ana Costa, managing the WFCS'2000 secretariat, did an excellent job in coordinating activities of the Local Organizing Committee. We are grateful to all those members of the Local Organizing Committee.

The success of any conference depends on the quality of the program and participation of people. We thank you all for being here. We trust that you will find the technical program intellectually stimulating, and your stay in the beautiful and historic city of Porto enjoyable.

Eduardo Tovar and Richard Zurawski, WFCS'2000 General Co-Chairmen