EurIPS organisational report

Draft version, Dec. 12, 2025

Abstract. EurIPS is a community-organised conference that runs in parallel with NeurIPS. EurIPS is an experiment endorsed by the NeurIPS board. The primary objective of EurIPS is to provide a venue for accessing select NeurIPS content without requiring travel to the Americas. This document aims to provide insights into the process of organising EurIPS, allowing the wider community to learn from the experience. We further hope that this document can initiate a general discussion of how conferences should unfold in the coming years.

This document is currently a draft; the final version will be released after the conference to incorporate community feedback.

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Table of contents

What is EurIPS?

EurIPS 2025 is a European conference that runs in parallel with NeurIPS. Here, accepted NeurIPS papers can additionally be presented and discussed. This experimental initiative is developed in collaboration with NeurIPS, but is organised by an independent group of researchers (see page 10).

ELLIS hosted an UnConference the day before EurIPS officially began. This was co-located with EurIPS, and in practice, the two events are best viewed as a single event.

The conference featured keynote presentations, NeurIPS paper presentations (both posters and orals), workshops, affinity workshops, and more.

The main conference and the ELLIS UnConference took place in Bella Center, Copenhagen, Denmark. Workshops took place at the IT University of Copenhagen (ITU), the University of Copenhagen (UCPH), and the Bella Center.

Dec 2, 2025	ELLIS UnConference
Dec 3-5, 2025	EurIPS main conference
Dec 6-7, 2025	EurIPS workshops

EurIPS is an experiment; whether it continues into 2026 and beyond is yet to be determined (see page 30).

Motivations for EurIPS

We have observed a wide variety of motivations for EurIPS, including the following.

Challenges of Cross-Atlantic travel. Long flights are a source of significant pollution. The scientific community should not disregard climate science. Long trips, especially right before Christmas, are further challenging for researchers with kids.

The US is hardening its border control. During 2025, European researchers were detained at the US border and denied access to the country. Many countries, including those in Europe, are tightening their borders, making it difficult to find a single country to host the global Machine Learning community.

Conferences are getting too big. It is difficult for people to connect when 20,000+ are joining the conference. Furthermore, the pandemic taught us that large conferences are super-spreader events for disease.

Conferences connect scientists with industry. This, however, mostly benefits companies that are geographically near the conference site. A US-based conference, therefore, primarily supports US-based innovation; the same applies to a European conference. Several sponsors have informed us that they specifically supported EurIPS because of its European venue.

Concerns with EurIPS

Introducing a new venue like EurIPS is not without problems.

It creates a schism. Having continental branches of NeurIPS may reduce interactions between researchers from different regions. This could result in a divide in the community, as well as echo chambers, which would be very harmful. We certainly do not aim for this. However, current circumstances render it difficult for some European researchers to travel to the US. We consider a European branch as a way of keeping the NeurIPS community accessible despite current tensions.

Europe is just as bad as the US. When it comes to visa issues, Europe is no more open than the US. People who struggle to enter the US may have an equally hard time entering Europe. However, having a European branch does increase visa diversity, but significant problems in this regard remain. Empirically, we noted a strong interest in participation from Europe, China, and Africa. We did not anticipate the latter two. Finally, we have heard from Israeli members of the machine learning community that they feel less safe in Europe than in the US. Clearly, no single country can suit all.

Relationships ♥

EurIPS would not be feasible without organisational support from NeurIPS and ELLIS. We are deeply grateful to both.

NeurIPS. EurIPS is endorsed by NeurIPS after a discussion with the NeurIPS board. In the initial phases of organisation, we had several meetings with the main NeurIPS organisers, including General and Program Chairs. They have given feedback on key decisions.

NeurIPS has further provided free virtual access to all EurIPS participants. We have been further supported by Event Hosts, which are the professional conference organisers behind NeurIPS.

ELLIS. Two of the EurIPS general chairs have significant roles in ELLIS. Bernhard Schölkopf was the president of ELLIS during the initial steps of planning, and Serge Belongie took over this role thereafter. The close involvement of ELLIS broadened our reach, both when interacting with the NeurIPS board and with the wider community. This has been essential.

ELLIS has further chosen to co-locate its UnConference with EurIPS, which gave us an extra day of content. This was critical as we had significant worries about whether we would have enough content to make for an interesting conference (this turned out not to be an issue).

EurIPS would not have happened without the close involvement of ELLIS from day one.

Team

General Chairs
Logistics, economy, and overall decisions
Søren Hauberg
> Technical University of Denmark

Aasa Feragen
> Technical University of Denmark

Bernhard Schölkopf
> Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems

Serge Belongie
> University of Copenhagen and the Pioneer Centre for AI

Program chairs
Keynote selection
Philip Torr
> University of Oxford

Chloe-Agathe Azencott
> Mines Paris–PSL, Institut Curie, and INSERM

Claire Vernade
> University of Tübingen

Kristian Kersting
> Technical University of Darmstadt

Samuel Kaski
> Aalto University and the University of Manchester

Søren Hauberg
> Technical University of Denmark

Workshop chairs
Workshop selection and paper handling
Jes Frellsen
> Technical University of Denmark

Manuel Gomez Rodriguez
> Max Planck Institute for Software Systems

Yingzhen Li
> Imperial College London

Dan Witzner Hansen
> IT University of Copenhagen

Affinity and inclusion chairs
Support for affinity workshops and registration waivers
Stella Graßhof
> IT University of Copenhagen

Raghavendra Selvan
> University of Copenhagen

Edwige Cyffers
> Institute of Science and Technology Austria

Pierre Marion
> Inria

Web chair
IT infrastructure
Yevgen Zainchkovskyy
> Technical University of Denmark

Sponsorship chairs
Recruiting sponsors

Wouter Boomsma
 University of Copenhagen

Simon Olsson
 Chalmers University of Technology

Robert Jenssen
 The Arctic University of Norway

Jan-Willem van de Meent
 University of Amsterdam

Jonas Peters
 ETH Zurich

Robert Peharz
 TU Graz

Pierre-Alexandre Mattei
 Inria, Université Côte d'Azur

Linus Bleistein
 Inria Montpellier

Ti John
 Aalto University

Startup Village Chairs
Startup selection

Theodoros Evgeniou
 INSEAD

Peter Gehler
 University of Tübingen

Communication

Joakim Bruslund Haurum
 University of Southern Denmark

Konstantinos Derpanis
 York University/Samsung AI Centre

ELLIS UnConference chairs
UnConference organisation

Vincent Fortuin
 Helmholtz AI, TU Munich

James Odgers
 Helmholtz Munich

Søren Hauberg
 Technical University of Denmark

Organizational support
Logistics

Teresa Krausmann
 CAP Partner

Anne Ørsted Pedersen
 Wonderful Copenhagen

Christine Funke
 ELLIS

Lena Schadock
 ELLIS

Grassroots initiatives

EurIPS is a grassroots initiative. Many organisational decisions were the direct result of volunteers declaring their interest in a particular activity for which they were given responsibility.

Startup activities. Initially, we had planned to shine some light on startups to show interesting companies in Europe. The community quickly expanded on these efforts to have the Startup Village, a panel debate on innovation, and a workshop targeting innovators.

Childcare. We did not plan to have childcare support at the conference due to the perceived complexities. The community pushed back, and we changed course. Subsequently, it turned out that childcare was neither complex (just pay a company) nor overly expensive.

Registration waiver program. We had a highly uncertain economy and did not plan to offer complementary registration to anyone, including the organising committee. Retrospectively, it would have been nice to offer organisers free registration. There was a significant community push to have a registration waiver program for those with financial needs, and with increasing sponsor interest, we eventually implemented this. The lateness with which this happened confused and resulted in extra work to reimburse some attendees. Again, a longer planning process would have brought earlier sponsorships, giving a better overview of the economy.

SoMe mattered. To involve the wider community, we relied on social media. The social media chairs monitored activity on social media and put significant work into spreading the word about the existence of EurIPS. This was crucial. Yet, we note that this strategy did not reach the entire community, and we expect biases in whom we did reach. We do not have a solution, but consider it important to put thought into how best to reach the community.

Difficulties

Several difficulties arose during the organisation of EurIPS. Most were self-inflicted due to the fast organisation of the conference. If these mistakes affected you, we are sincerely sorry.

Limited time. EurIPS was put together in a very short amount of time. It might have been smarter to wait another year to ensure sufficient time for planning, but we felt a sense of urgency and decided it was better to live with the mistakes we were bound to make.

Programming is hard. We did not control the number of papers to be presented at EurIPS, nor did we control the distribution of posters, spotlights, or orals. This made it difficult to make a scientific program. Retrospectively, we should have had a more tightly controlled process with early bird deadlines and target paper numbers for workshops.

Having two budgets is harder than one. We are grateful to ELLIS for co-locating the UnConference with EurIPS, as this provided high-quality additional content to the conference participants. Financially, EurIPS and the UnConference were separate, which caused some difficulties. This became evident when we started to run out of tickets. We had to close UnConference registration slightly before the EurIPS registration, which confused attendees. In an eventual future, it might be beneficial if a joint budget could be created. Due to time pressure, that was not an option this year.

Lack of virtual author passes. At the NeurIPS paper submission deadline, the NeurIPS website stated that it was acceptable for authors to present their papers virtually without going to the US. In our planning phases, we were expecting that some authors would use this option while attending EurIPS in person. It caused anxiety in the community when this option was

subsequently removed from the NeurIPS website, and we worried about whether or not we would be able to fill our scientific programme. This concern could have been alleviated if the authors of accepted NeurIPS papers had been allowed to present in person at EurIPS. Yet, we acknowledge that such a policy could dilute the experience at the main NeurIPS conference. We were contacted by a number of authors who were confused about the purpose of EurIPS and who felt pressure to avoid it.

Dependency on NeurIPS. While the NeurIPS endorsement gave us an amazing platform and a starting boost, our dependency on NeurIPS also delayed us both in announcing our conference, our workshop calls, and our registration, making our timeline and budget more unstable than they needed to be.

Last-minute cancelled keynotes. A series of unexpected events caused two keynote speakers to cancel their presentations. We recruited replacement speakers from the pool of registered attendees, which fortunately counted many great alternatives.

Disaster moments

We faced several challenges that were particularly dire.

Tax issues. There was a disagreement among different organisations' support staff regarding whether we had to pay VAT (sales tax) on the income from registration fees. We eventually decided to pay VAT even if the question remained unresolved. This was a significant loss of income.

Quick announcement of the Salon des Refusés. EurIPS featured a poster session for rejected NeurIPS papers. We decided to hold this session for two reasons: to ensure we had sufficient scientific content, and to show support for authors who felt their papers could have been above the acceptance bar. Our announcement, however, led to criticism against the NeurIPS program chairs at a very stressful time, and for this, we are very sorry.

Missing information in the Startup Village. As a new initiative, we introduced the Startup Village (see page 20) as an accessible way for startups to engage with the research community. Unfortunately, our webpage was not sufficiently clear that participation in the Startup Village required being a Startup sponsor, and some companies assumed that this was free of charge. This was most unfortunate, and a notable number of startups decided to deregister as a consequence.

No more seats. The ticket demand was greater than anticipated for the UnConference, the main conference, and the workshops. This, combined with our wish to subsidise student tickets and students being overrepresented among late-registering workshop authors, created a situation with an unclear budget and strained the physical capacity of the venues. In particular,

the workshop venues did not scale to our needs, and we had to get larger rooms on very short notice. This problem was amplified by EurIPS running out of tickets in the middle of the surge of workshop author registration, leaving many workshop authors struggling to get a ticket. These issues were solved by manually vetting all remaining workshop organisers and authors to allow them in without overbooking too much. This was time-consuming, and we had to disappoint many potential attendees from the general audience, who we could not allow to register.

If EurIPS hadn't been organised on such short notice, we expect that this process would have been smoother. Retrospectively, we should have kept tighter control over the number of allowed papers at each workshop. We did not anticipate the overwhelming interest – our main concern was whether we would get enough interest, not too much, which was a mistake. A tighter control on the allowed number of papers would have made it easier to keep reserve tickets for workshops.

We apologise to all those who did not get a ticket.

Politics

Machine learning and AI play a significant role in society, and their importance has rapidly increased. Conferences play a role and should arguably no longer merely be seen as a place where researchers hang out to chat.

Innovation. Conferences connect innovators, investors, and researchers. This creates new companies, resulting in direct benefits to society. However, we worry about geographic biases. E.g., a US-based conference predominantly leads to US-based innovation, and vice versa for a European-based conference. When the research community opts to concentrate conferences in certain geographic regions, we expect those regions to benefit.

Connecting with policymakers. Some policymakers interested in AI attend conferences, including EurIPS. This is an opportunity for the research community to ensure that AI-related policies are grounded in facts rather than perceptions. However, there is again a geographic bias: policymakers mainly attend conferences in the geographic region they represent.

A regional platform matters. We were surprised but pleased to learn that several parties chose EurIPS as their platform for making announcements. For example, eurAIx was announced during EurIPS, and SPRIND decided to announce their 1 billion initiative. This is evidence that conferences have political value.

We encourage the scientific community to reflect on how conferences interact with society. We no longer have the luxury of seeing all conferences as purely scientific.

Innovation activities

The Startup Village. As a new initiative within machine learning, EurIPS introduced the Startup Village. The ambition was to create an official platform for entrepreneurs to meet the research community. We inherited the idea from the MICCAI conference, and were pleased to see that the NeurIPS Mexico site explored a similar idea. As publicly employed researchers, we see it as part of our societal obligations to help connect entrepreneurs and researchers.

We had 80 startups apply to join the Startup Village and eventually accepted 22 companies. Due to capacity limitations, we had to limit the number of companies. We emphasise that the demand was notably higher than we could satisfy, suggesting that the Startup Village as a concept should be considered for future conferences.

Participation in the Startup Village cost 1000€, and the companies got listed as Startup Sponsors. The price was set to cover our costs associated with running the Village, and we did not have notable income on this account. In the future, we recommend reconsidering the cost and perhaps making a dedicated Startup Track for the conference.

We are grateful for support from eurAIx, the Minerva Project and the ELIAS Alliance.

Innovation panel. The main conference featured a panel debate dedicated to the challenges faced by researchers launching startups.

Startup affinity workshop. A workshop was created to provide a dedicated community for researchers interested in entrepreneurship. This featured discussions, pitch sessions, and opportunities for networking and seeking mentorship.

Workshops

The community was given an unreasonably short amount of time to propose workshops. The call for workshops opened in July and closed one month later. It was a challenge that such a limited time was available to make proposals, and that this coincided with the summer holidays.

Surprisingly, we received 52 proposals, and we needed to bring in external reviewers (we had expected a lower number of proposals that could have been handled by the workshop chairs). In slightly more than one week, nearly all proposals had three reviews.

We had initially planned to host 8-10 workshops on the IT University of Copenhagen campus, but due to the many strong proposals, we ended up securing more rooms at the University of Copenhagen and the Bella Center. This allowed us to accept a total of 18 workshops.

While it was good that we managed to include more workshops, it was unfortunate that they were split across multiple venues, as having shared breaks would have been good.

We were not prepared for the large interest in the EurIPS workshops. This caused some friction as we needed to urgently increase both the number and size of available rooms. We experienced delays and general difficulties with registration due to the underestimated popularity. We hope that the community forgives the friction.

Statistics

EurIPS had 2198 participants, which was notably higher than the initially planned maximum of 1500. of which 41% were students, 27% academics, and 21% were from industry. The remaining 7% were sponsors, helpers, members of the press, or only partook in the ELLIS UnConference.

ELLIS UnConference
3.3%

Volunteer
1.9%

Academics
26.8%

Industry
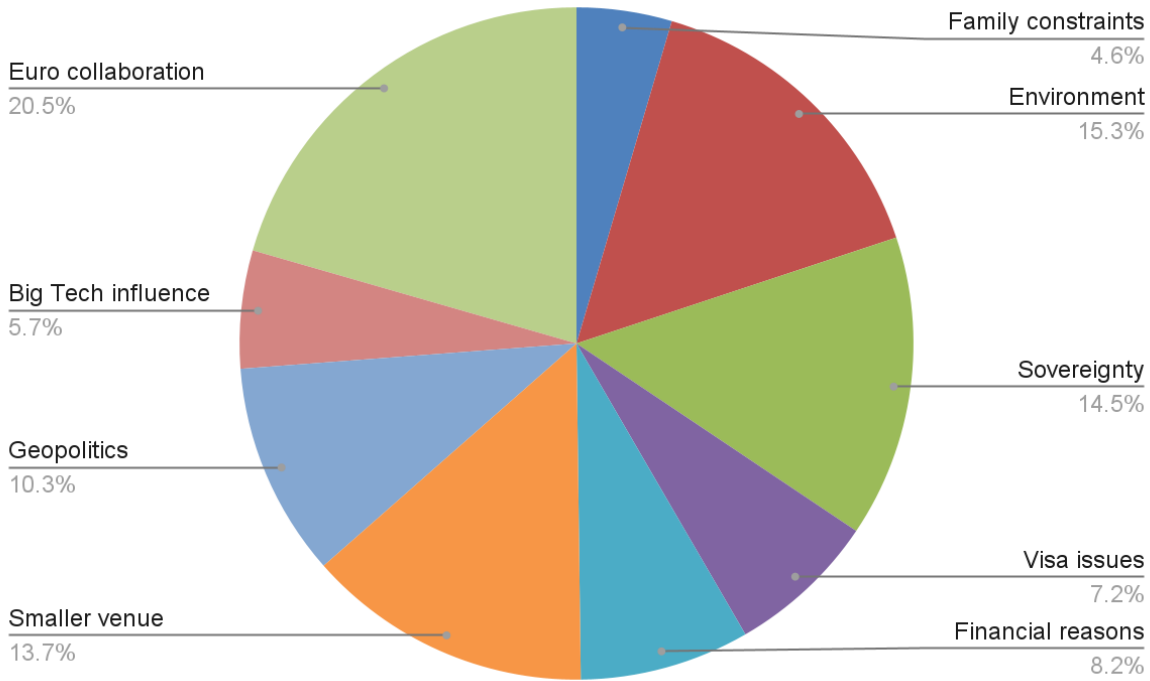21.0%

Students
40.8%

Sponsor
5.6%
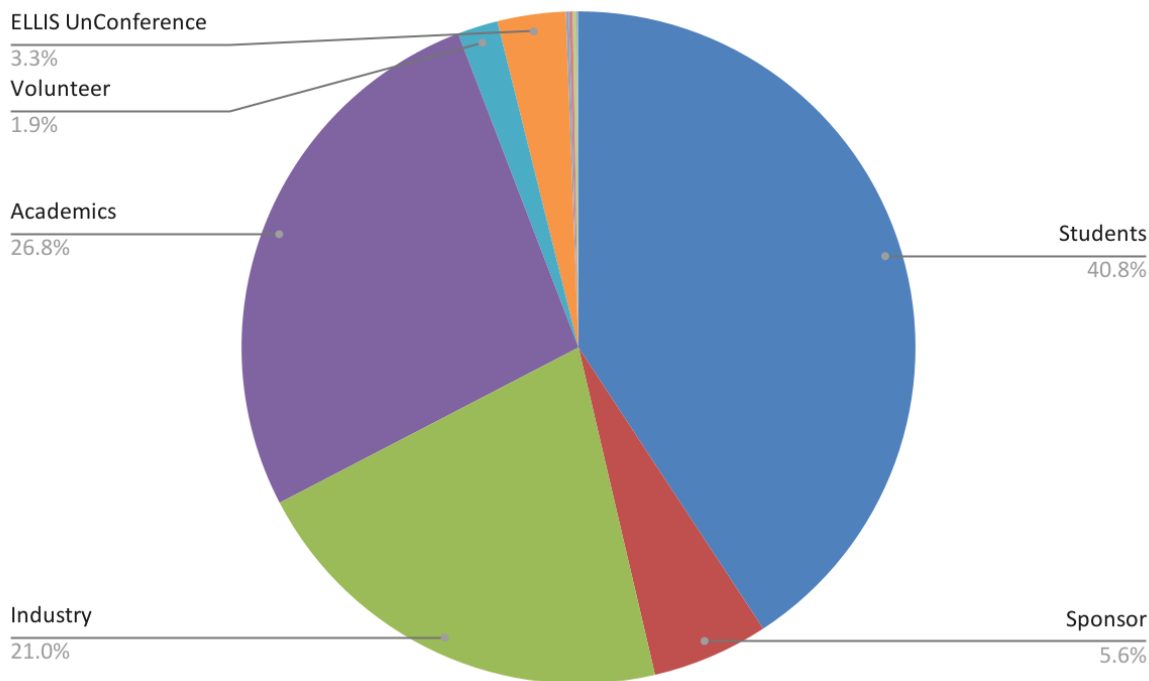
Participants came from 56 different countries, both from Europe and beyond. The latter included both the United States of America, China, India, Canada, Nigeria, and more.
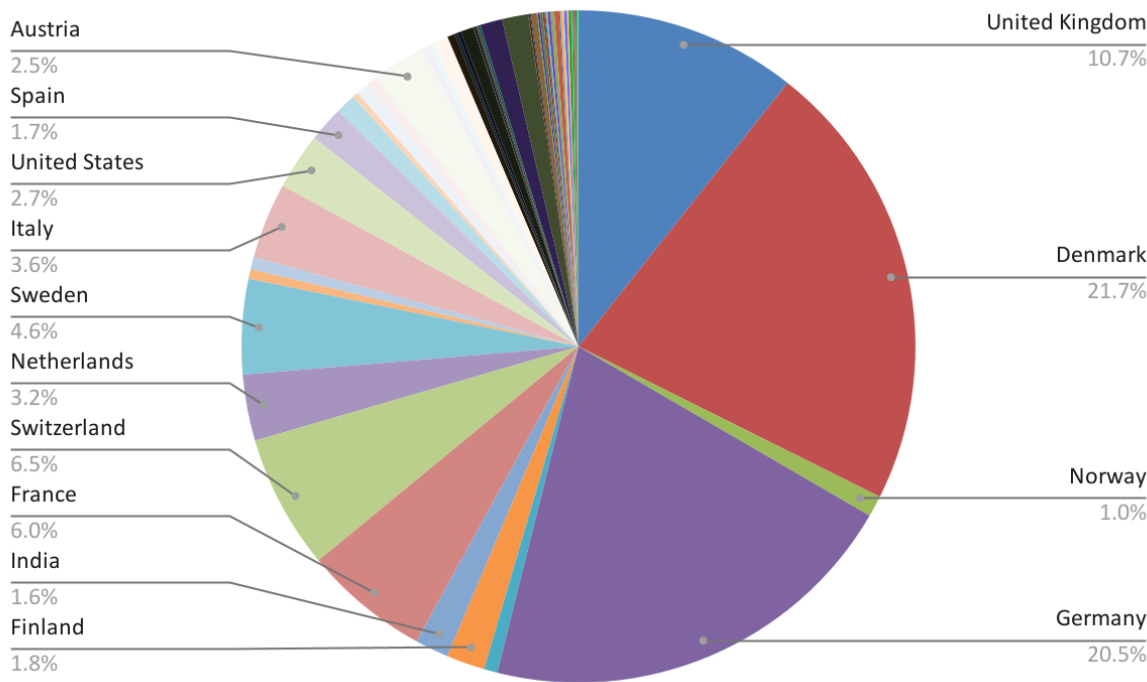
Approximately 85% of the attendees partook in the workshops, and likewise for the main conference. This suggests that the workshops had a very strong community engagement. The UnConference was attended by 74% of the participants.

Gender distribution. We did not collect gender data among participants. Among the organisers, we had a notable overrepresentation of men (24 out of 31). The large sponsorship team dominated the unfortunate statistic. Among general and program chairs, men held 6 out of 9 positions.

Poll data. At the end of the conference, we asked participants why they opted to attend EurIPS.

Euro collaboration 20.5%
Family constraints 4.6%
Environment 15.3%
Big Tech influence 5.7%
Sovereignty 14.5%
Geopolitics 10.3%
Visa issues 7.2%
Smaller venue 13.7%
Financial reasons 8.2%

Budget

We will release a high-level budget for EurIPS as soon as possible. We currently do not have all the required information in place, as some expenses are not yet evident.

Lessons learned

We can do it. EurIPS went from conceptualisation to realisation in slightly more than half a year. In contrast, NeurIPS often takes several years to plan. While EurIPS was flawed in many ways, it was possible. We should not be afraid of shaking things up a bit, even if time is limited.

Get help. Early on, we hired a professional conference organiser (CAP Partner). While this is costly, we could not have realised the event without this support. Many logistical choices had to be made, which was rather overwhelming (made worse by haste). Having professional support made this significantly less daunting.

Trust the community. We repeatedly experienced that the wider machine learning community was highly supportive of the EurIPS experiment. Ranging from proposing workshops on short notice to forgiving our many blunders, we experienced a high degree of community support. This has also allowed us to be quite transparent about our decisions, which we find healthy.

Have fun. Organising EurIPS has been a rather large task, so we have taken the liberty of having some fun along the way. The quirky name 'EurIPS' is itself a wordplay on 'European NeurIPS', and our conference beer 'EurIPA' was a wordplay on 'EurIPS'. This was indicative of us not taking ourselves too seriously.

The future of EurIPS

EurIPS is an experiment conducted for one year. We release this report to provide transparency and spark a debate on what should happen next.

We believe the community should discuss these matters and kicked off this discussion during a panel debate between the general chairs on the last main conference day.

Should EurIPS continue in its present form? Should conferences experiment with a greater degree of regional distribution? Should a new independent European meeting be created? Should one be grown out of an existing meeting? Should we return to the conference model from previous years? Is there a need for decoupling of publication and presentation of scientific works?

We won't pretend to know the answer to any of these questions, but encourage you, dear reader, to discuss with your peers.

Sponsors

EurIPS could not have happened without the generous support of many sponsors. We appreciate their contributions to the community.