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2004-2005: Moving to the Heart of the EU

Jouko Ruissalo

Past President of the Council of European Professional Informatics Societies (CEPIS), Jouko Ruissalo (2003-2005) presents a time of change when CEPIS moved its Secretariat to Brussels (Belgium) and became increasingly involved in European Union (EU) projects such as Harmonise.

Keywords: CEDEFOP, e-Skills Certification, Executive Committee, FIPA, Harmonise, Secretariat.

During my Presidency, CEPIS showed the capability to adjust its capacity and activities to developments and changes in its environment. These necessary adjustments played an important role in the actions taken in CEPIS operations during the years 2004 and 2005.

The Executive Committee, as well as members, had long recognized that the European Union had growing interest in the Information Technologies (IT) industry and IT professional development. Several projects had been started to create a solid base for the European industry and keep Europe in a leading position in global development. As the representative of IT-professionals of Europe, CEPIS participated in these discussions.

Let me summarize some examples of CEPIS efforts and actions during my presidency:

1) Harmonise project

The Harmonise project¹ was funded by the European Commission (EC) under the umbrella of the Leonardo project and conducted by CEPIS, starting early spring 2004. Participating members were from Austria, Estonia, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. The goal was to survey existing certification schemes and categorize them into a common scheme.

2) E-Skills certification in Europe

CEPIS experts carried out a survey on e-Skills Certification in Europe analysing voluntary approaches to setting European level quality standards in European countries. The study was commissioned by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and the first results were presented in autumn 2004.

3) Other activities

CEPIS representatives attended several conferences, workshops and specialist meetings.

Although, CEPIS participation in the European debate during 2004 and 2005 was not very systematic and coordinated, it created a good basis for a more planned approach. It became clear that CEPIS had to find its role among the group of European influential players as this was the only way to earn its position as the representative of European IT professionals.

4) CEPIS establishes Brussels Office

Since the European political arena is located in Brus-

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Jouko Ruissalo started his professional career in systems design and programming in 1964. He has forty years' experience working as manager and director in international enterprises and associations, such as Unilever, Kone, ISS and of course CEPIS. Between 1999 and 2004, Jouko served as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Finnish Information Processing Association (FIPA). Now semi-retired Jouko works part-time as a consultant and spends his spare time volunteering with the Lions Club and enjoying family life. <j.ruissalo@elisanet.fi>.

sels, the Executive Committee decided to move the main CEPIS office there, in order to be closer to the European decision making "hearth". Cooperation with the Association for Electrical, Electronic & Information Technologies (VDE) in Frankfurt (Germany) had been very satisfactory, but the move was necessary. VDE helped CEPIS to find a new location and apartment. Presence in Brussels created better possibilities for CEPIS to participate in European projects. CEPIS had established its own presence in the administrative "kernel" of Europe. CEPIS first CEO Dr. Peter Bumann retired April 2005 and a new CEO and assistant were appointed to the Brussels office.

Finally, I have to say that my participation in CEPIS meetings since 1999 as representative of FIPA, my membership in Executive Committee, and my Presidency gave me an excellent opportunity to familiarize myself with EU projects and meet members from different countries. It provided me with a good background to continue as senior consultant. On top of that I made a lot of good friends in Europe, with whom I share common memories.

Today I am already retired, but I still participate in some projects.

¹ See summary of Harmonise project in UPGRADE IX (3), June 2008. <<http://www.upgrade-cepis.org/issues/2008/3/upgrade-vol-IX-3.html#cepisnews>>.