

**Message of the Chairman of the Local Organising Committee:
Professor George Carayannis
Director of the Institute for Language and Speech Processing, Athens, Greece**

LREC-2000, organised by the European Language Resources Association (ELRA) in cooperation with the Institute for Language and Speech Processing and the National Technical University of Athens, brings together this year a great number of scientists and industrialists coming from all over the world (Europe, USA, Japan, China, Australia and many eastern European countries), thus reflecting the LREC series' truly international dimension.

Language resources (LR) constitute the basic material, the main ingredient, which is used nowadays to build man-machine communication and modern telecommunications components. Because of their role as basic material, sophisticated evaluation of LR is deemed necessary in order to prove that they can actually be used without hesitation in the building of complex systems, such as speech recognition, text-to-speech synthesis, machine translation and information retrieval engines. All these systems need a priori information to be taught to work properly and this information can be found in actual pieces of written and spoken corpora, lexica and terminology. Our ability to use language is transferred to the machine via learning procedures through language resources properly adapted, inaugurating, in this way, a new relationship between man and machine.

You will discover during the conference that it has a rich microstructure: Oral, Poster and Panel Sessions and many other events. The scientific programme is rich as well, as it covers so many aspects of the engineering and the use of the language resources. All this rich structure is the fruit of the inspiration of the President of ELRA, Prof. Antonio Zampolli, who has guided all our initiatives, for more than the one-year preparation phase of the conference, using his experience, his know-how and his vitality. The basic ideas and concepts of the conference have been initiated during the ELRA board meetings which have been so fruitful during the last three years under his Presidency.

The art of preparing language resources to be used in the design of modern subsystems and the corpus-algorithm interaction is the object of the LREC conference, which was born in Granada in 1998 and moved to Athens this year, while we are now waiting for the decision of its next location. I hope that you will find in Athens an adequate mixture of science, culture and modern life, all necessary to build a successful conference. I am sure that all people involved in the local organisation will help you to discover the local assets and life style.

All of us, members of the local organising committee, coming from various Greek institutions, consider it a privilege to host you here during the conference days. It is particularly important for our institutions and the country in general to establish contacts with you and understand the specific know-how that you possess. This conference is an opening to new international cooperation and an encouragement to further advance our work in the field of human language technology.

On behalf of the local organising committee, I have the pleasure to welcome to Athens all the members of ELRA and all the conference participants. We will be very pleased to offer you any assistance, to make your participation to LREC-2000 and your stay in Attica more enjoyable.

George Carayannis
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Director of the Institute for Language and Speech Processing