Message from ELRA President
Stelios Piperidis

Let me first express, on behalf of the ELRA Board and Members, our profound gratitude to His Excellency Dr George Abela, President of Malta, for his Distinguished Patronage of LREC 2010 and for honoring us with his presence. Our gratitude is also extended to His Excellency M. Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council for the importance that the EC confer to multilingualism, one of the cornerstones of our conference.

This 7th edition of LREC coincides with ELRA's fifteenth anniversary. ELRA was established in 1995, in a setting where data-driven techniques had just started rising, numerical and learning methods had not prevailed in the language technology field. It was the work and strategic thought of a few visionary people to set up an association that would take care of identifying, archiving, and distributing language data, as well as cater for language technology evaluation. Initial goals were later on extended into production and validation of language data, production of technology evaluation packages, as well as into offerings of specific services (upon demand) and organisation of specific events, LREC being the major such event since 1998. And every LREC edition seems to outperform the previous one in a range of dimensions, most notably in numbers of submissions and participants.

Today, we live in a totally different setting. No need to stress the importance of data any longer. Data Intensive Science and Research is the new paradigm and Digital Data Deluge a new term that challenges the minds of many of us. Infrastructures, detailed machine-readable metadata and documentation of language data and tools, data and metadata exchange and harvesting, processing tools in the form of web services, static or dynamic workflows were just unknown terms 10 years ago in our field. Yet, today, they are part of our daily vocabulary and appear high in our research and development agendas, as you will notice in the next three days.

Throughout this period, from 1995 to 2010, ELRA has achieved to establish itself as a high-quality data centre, as a main player in the field of language resources and evaluation, while it also enjoys a steady base of membership. In times changing at a dazzling speed, ELRA is constantly responding to new challenges and adapting to new cultures and trends. ELRA has recast its definition of resources by extending it to encompass tools that are, by contemporary methods, used in the LR production, validation, and evaluation processes. As announced at a previous LREC, besides its ever evolving catalogue of language data with clear distribution rights and licences, ELRA has set up the Universal Catalogue, a bottom-up, community-built resource radar, a catalogue of resources, data and tools, irrespective of whether these can be acquired through ELDA, ELRA's Distribution Agency, or not. In a similar vein, through its catalogues, ELRA reinforces its cooperation links with major data centres around the world, notably LDC and NICT, trying to unify all component catalogues into a Global Inventory of LRs. Likewise, ELRA's resources are now harvestable by OLAC.

To achieve these goals, ELRA is restructuring its activities along three axes : a) *infrastructural*, taking care of identification, cataloguing, updating metadata-based LR description and documentation, and new simpler distribution mechanisms, b) *scientific*, taking care of LRs production & validation, and evaluation, and c) *promotion*, taking care of marketing and promotion activities like LREC and information aggregation services.

Along the infrastructural line, LREC and ELRA are proud of having initiated, implemented and supported the LREC 2010 Map. As will be discussed in various other opportunities during the

conference, this new concept is yet another concerted effort towards a new culture, it constitutes a very rich source of information, that I am pretty certain will be re-used many times, and functions as a unique tool for monitoring progress, identifying specific gaps, highlighting trends. The LREC 2010 Map is a truly community-built information base, and we are deeply indebted to all of you for embracing the idea and making it happen. The Map is the common achievement of all of us, our first shared meta-resource.

ELRA, through its operational body ELDA, is also proud of being a founding member of the newly launched META-NET, a Network of Excellence dedicated to fostering the technological foundations of the European multilingual information society. In the framework of META-NET, by its nature and objectives, ELRA will play an important role in META-SHARE, an open, integrated, secured and interoperable exchange facility for language data and tools for the Human Language Technologies domain and all other applicative domains (e.g., digital libraries, cognitive systems, robotics, etc), where language plays a critical role.

Just a few words about the Antonio Zampolli Prize, the prize created by the ELRA Board in order to honour our founder and first president who did so much for the field of language resources. Citing the prize articles: "The Antonio Zampolli Prize is intended to recognize the outstanding contributions to the advancement of Human Language Technologies through all issues related to Language Resources and Evaluation. In awarding the prize we are seeking to reward and encourage innovation and inventiveness in the development and use of language resources and evaluation of HLTs. The prize covers the field of Language Resources and Language Technology Evaluation in the areas of spoken language, written language and terminology". At the LREC 2010 conference, the Prize will be awarded for the fourth time. The ELRA Board has been very happy to receive nominations made by outstanding people in the field, and we recognize there are several persons who are eligible for this prestigious prize.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who have worked so hard to make this conference a big success; the LREC Programme Committee, chaired by Nicoletta Calzolari, the Scientific Committee, the International Advisory Committee, Nicoletta's group in Pisa, Khalid Choukri and the ELDA staff in Paris. Particular thanks go to Mike Rosner and his Local Organising Committee for taking care of the myriad of issues that pop up when undertaking the organisation of such a complex and demanding conference as LREC, a Herculean task.

Dear LREC Participants,

The Conference is now in your hands. With your active participation in the oral sessions, your lively discussions with the presenters at the poster sessions, your visits to the EC Village to discuss with the investigators of the research projects funded by the European Commission, LREC 2010 will be yet another success.

I welcome you all to LREC 2010 in Malta and wish you a fruitful conference.

Stelios Piperidis
ELRA President