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Editorial

Aircraft design education in Europe

In 1993 an initiative was taken by Professor Rodrigo Martínez-Val of ETSIA (Madrid, Spain) and Dr. Kevin Knowles of Cranfield University (Shrivenham, UK) to organize a workshop for academic staff active in aircraft design education at European universities. Although before that time there had been contacts between design educators — for example at international conferences, in research programs and within the framework of educational (exchange) programs subsidized by the European Union (ECATA, COMETT) — it was felt that the quality of teaching aircraft design could benefit from more regular exchanges of experience between a much larger (in fact unlimited) number of representatives from various countries and universities on their own budgets, avoiding the complication of formal applications for external funding.

The first European Workshop on Aircraft Design Education was held in Madrid in 1994 and was hosted by the University of Madrid (ETSIA). There were approximately 25 participants from the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. It lasted 2½ days and had an informal character, with many opportunities for personal contacts. All participants presented the educational programme of their university and there were many in-depth discussions on items such as the use of software and data sheets for conceptual design, (im)possibilities to publish about design and support by the industry. After the workshop it was agreed that workshops would be organized every two years, hosted by those participants who could find sufficient financial support from their university and from their local or national industry. Objectives were formulated as follows:

1. To allow European lecturers concerned with Aircraft Design to continue their active collaboration.
2. To discuss Aircraft Design problems as regards research and education.
3. To enhance close cooperation with the aerospace industry for the two aspects mentioned above.

In order to allow local organizers, the greatest possible freedom and to keep the initiative as open as possible to those who are interested to join at any time, it was decided, at least for the time being, not to establish a formal organization. Workshops were organized in 1996, 1998 and 2000, hosted by the Universities of Berlin, Bristol and Turin, respectively, all with financial support of the industry. In 1996 there was emphasis on views of the industry on design education and several staff members of Airbus Industries presented their views. This workshop lasted only one day in order to enable the participants to visit the ILA exhibition. In 1998 there were presentations on several design projects and research associated with design, and the number of participants had increased to more than 40. Many useful new contacts were made.

Although most presentations were accompanied by handouts, a formal medium to publish had been lacking until 1998. The appearance of Elsevier's refereed journal *Aircraft Design* has now been used to collect into this special issue several papers related to aircraft design education presented at the successful two-day workshop 2000 in Torino, Italy. Several other papers have appeared or will appear in other issues. The next workshop will most likely be held in May 2002 at the University of Linköping, Sweden. Those readers who are not yet familiar with this rewarding activity are advised to make a note in their agenda as soon as a final date has been fixed. You may eventually contact Professor Petter Krus, who is a member of the editorial board of this journal.

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