EuCAP 2010: Not Raking Over the Ashes

L. Jofre, M. Sierra, J. Romeu and G. Roqueta,

And the EuCAP'2010 Local Organizing Committee

UPC Barcelona and UPM Madrid, Spain

E-mail: romeu@tsc.upc.edu

On April 15, 2010, an unusual natural phenomenon turned the world upside down. The Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull, dormant for 200 years, started to erupt, melting ice and ending ashes into the high atmosphere. This huge mass of ash forced the cancellation of many flights and disrupted air traffic across northern Europe, stranding thousands of passengers, and provoking one of the worst airspace crises ever.

The airport of Barcelona, Spain, like most European airports, could not escape from this closure, and many tourists and businessmen were stuck for some days at the Catalan metropolis. "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade" said someone. This was the thought of many delegates of the fourth edition of the European Conference on Antennas and Propagation, which took place from April 12-16, 2010, at the Barcelona International Convention Center (CCIB). Many of them decided to take some extra days to visit the city. Others, less lucky, rediscovered the old days of slow traveling, and with wise combinations of bus, train, and boats were able to travel to as far as Helsinki, Finland. However, all will remember EuCAP'2010 not only for its unusual ending, but mainly for the quality and demonstrated success of the conference.

The success of EuCAP'2010 exceeded all expectations. 1150 abstracts were submitted and reviewed by the 300 members of the Technical Program Committee, resulting in around 900 accepted papers. Nearly 1100 delegates attended the conference, where they found 18 invited speakers, nine IEEE Distinguished Lecturers, and more than 40 exhibitors. In addition, six workshops and 10 short courses were carried out during the conference. All these impressive figures made EuCAP'2010 the most outstanding antennas and propagation event ever in Europe. Especially worth mentioning was the huge exhibition, doubtless the biggest

antennas and propagation exhibition in the world, which forced the conference to almost double the initially allocated space (Fig. 1).

This success was due to the many people who gave their time and effort to the conference organization. We would like to thank here all the members of the EuCAP Steering Committee, chaired by Prof. Juan R. Mosig (EPFL-Switzerland), who provided their expertise and guidance. Also invaluable was the assistance of all the members of the Organizing Committee. Last but not least, the generous and unconditional support of the students from the organizing universities (Barcelona, Madrid, and EPFL Switzerland) was enormously appreciated.

Fig. 1 The European Space Agency stand at the exhibition.

Fig. 2 World-famous architect A. Gaudi between the two conference co-Chairs, Profs. Manuel Sierra and Lluís Jofre.

Fig. 3 Juan R. Mosig (EurAAP/EuCAP) reminding the audience of the connection between J.C. Maxwell and the Organizing Committee.

Fig. 4 Poster sessions at EuCAP'2010.

Fig. 5 EuCAP attendees record one of the human towers created by the Castellers.

Fig. 6 Lucky owners of a ticket for the conference dinner.

Fig. 7 The conference dinner venue before dancing time.

Fig. 8 The conference dinner venue during the dancing time.

EuCAP'2010 opened with an opening address by Prof. Jofre, co-Chair of the conference, which included a short but intense reference to Barcelona's cultural riches (Fig. 2). This was followed by a few words from the EurAAP General Chair, Juan R. Mosig, who linked the activities of the EuCAP'2010 Organizing Committee to the Maxwellian verses (Fig. 3):

*Let me wake, and see my duty lie before me
straight and plain.*

*Let me rise refreshed, and ready to begin my
work again.*

(James Clerk Maxwell, Recollections of a Dreamland)

The Monday morning session then followed, with the first keynote address on "European Research New Trends," given by Prof. Andreu Mas-Colell, Secretary General of the European Research Council. The second keynote address was given by Prof. Nick Alexopoulos, former Dean of the Henry Samueli Engineering School at University of Irvine, California. His talk presented a personal and well-informed view of university-industry relations in the area of antenna research.

The technical program was organized in 12 parallel oral sessions in the mornings, well balanced between antennas and propagation, as well as between convened and unsolicited papers. Every afternoon included a couple of invited sessions delivered by renowned speakers, accompanied in parallel by two sets of poster sessions (a maximum of 50 posters simultaneously), covering a large variety of themes (Fig. 4).

The social program opened a welcome reception with an exhibition of the typical Catalan human towers, called "Castellers" (Fig. 5). It also included the opportunity to visit "Camp Nou," the largest stadium in Europe (98,787 places), to watch a match of FC Barcelona, the most successful soccer team of the last years. Finally, the conference gala dinner (Fig. 6) not only included the awards ceremony for best papers, but also a live Cuban salsa-dancing session that got both young and old shaking their bones (Fig. 7 and Fig. 8).

We were happy to have Prof. Constantine A. Balanis (Arizona State University) among the invited speakers. Prof. Balanis was pretty impressed by our conference, and accepted a request to write an "American" view of it. In the next section, he surveys a series of interesting topics and statistics (organization, venue, exhibition, age and gender of delegates, participating countries), and provides also some more personal feelings.