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## Preface

This volume contains most of the papers emerged from the Fifth Brainstorming Week on Membrane Computing (BWMC), held in Sevilla, from January 29 to February 2, 2007, in the organization of the Research Group on Natural Computing from the Department of Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence of Sevilla University. The first edition of BWMC was organized at the beginning of February 2003 in Rovira i Virgili University, Tarragona, and the next three editions took place in Sevilla at the beginning of February 2004, February 2005, and February 2006, respectively.

Keeping the tradition of previous meetings in this series, the fifth BWMC was conceived as a period of active interaction among the participants, with the emphasis on exchanging ideas and cooperation, hence with only a few (“provocative”) presentations scheduled in the first days of the meeting and with most of the time devoted to the joint work. The efficiency of this type of meetings was again proved to be very high and the present volume proves this assertion.

Pleasantly enough, after almost eight years since the research in this area was initiated, membrane computing is still an expanding research field, both with many theoretical issues of current interest, new problems and new research ideas, and with a growing number of applications, especially in biology and medicine.

The papers included in this volume, arranged in the alphabetic order of the authors, were collected in the form available at a short time after the brainstorming; several of them are still under elaboration. The idea is that the proceedings are a working instrument, part of the interaction started during the stay of authors in Sevilla, meant to make possible a further cooperation, this time having a written support.

A selection of the papers from these volumes will be considered for publication in a special issues of *International Journal of Unconventional Computing* (after the first BWMC, a special issue of *Natural Computing* – volume 2, number 3, 2003, and a special issue of *New Generation Computing* – volume 22, number 4, 2004, were published; papers from the second BWMC have appeared in a special issue of *Journal of Universal Computer Science* – volume 10, number

5, 2004, as well as in a special issue of *Soft Computing* – volume 9, number 5, 2005; a selection of papers written during the third BWMC have appeared in a special issue of *International Journal of Foundations of Computer Science* – volume 17, number 1, 2006); after the fourth BWMC a special issue of *Theoretical Computer Science* was edited – volume 372, numbers 2-3, 2007. Other papers elaborated during the fifth BWMC will be submitted to other journals or to suitable conferences. The reader interested in the final version of these papers is advised to check the current bibliography of membrane computing available in the Milano web page <http://psystems.disco.unimib.it> (with a mirror in China, at <http://bmc.hust.edu.cn/psystems>).

The list of participants as well as their email addresses are given below, with the aim of facilitating the further communication and interaction:

1. Ardelean Ioan, Institute of Biology of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania,  
`ioan.ardelean@ibiol.ro`
2. Balbontín-Noval Delia, University of Sevilla, Spain,  
`delia@us.es`
3. Bernardini Francesco, Leiden University, The Netherlands,  
`bernardi@liacs.nl`
4. Bianco Luca, University of Verona, Italy,  
`bianco@sci.univr.it`
5. Busi Nadia, University of Bologna, Italy,  
`busi@cs.unibo.it`
6. Cazzaniga Paolo, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy,  
`cazzaniga@disco.unimib.it`
7. Colomer Cugat M. Angels, University of Lleida, Spain,  
`Colomer@matematica.UdL.es`
8. Cordon Franco Andrés, University of Sevilla, Spain,  
`acordon@us.es`
9. Díaz-Pernil Daniel, University of Sevilla, Spain,  
`sbdani@us.es`
10. Ferretti Claudio, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy,  
`ferretti@disco.unimib.it`
11. Freund Rudolf, Technical University Wien, Austria,  
`rudi@emcc.at, rudi@logic.at`
12. García Arnau Marc, Polytechnical University of Madrid, Spain,  
`mgarnau@gmail.com`
13. Gheorghe Marian, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom,  
`marian@dcs.shef.ac.uk`
14. Graciani Díaz Carmen, University of Sevilla, Spain,  
`cgdiaz@us.es`
15. Gutiérrez-Naranjo Miguel Angel, University of Sevilla, Spain,  
`magutier@us.es`

16. Ionescu Mihai, University of Tarragona, Spain,  
`mihai_caltun@yahoo.com`
17. Leporati Alberto, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy,  
`leporati@disco.unimib.it`
18. Mardare Radu, University of Trento, Italy,  
`mardare@cosbi.eu`
19. Mauri Giancarlo, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy,  
`mauri@disco.unimib.it`
20. Nepomuceno-Chamorro Isabel, University of Sevilla, Spain,  
`isabelnepomuc@yahoo.es`
21. Nepomuceno-Chamorro Juan Antonio, University of Sevilla, Spain,  
`janepochamorro@yahoo.es`
22. Păun Gheorghe, Institute of Mathematics of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest,  
Romania, and University of Sevilla, Spain,  
`george.paun@imar.ro`, `gpaun@us.es`
23. Pérez-Jiménez Mario de Jesus, University of Sevilla, Spain,  
`marper@us.es`
24. Pescini Dario, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy,  
`pescini@disco.unimib.it`
25. Potapov Igor, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom,  
`igor@csc.liv.ac.uk`
26. Ramirez Martinez Daniel, Univ. of Sevilla, Spain,  
`thebluebishop@gmail.com`
27. Riscos-Núñez Agustín, University of Sevilla, Spain,  
`ariscosn@us.es`
28. Romero-Campero Francisco José, University of Sevilla, Spain,  
`fran@us.es`
29. Romero Jiménez Alvaro, University of Sevilla, Spain,  
`Alvaro.Romero@cs.us.es`
30. Sancho Caparrini Fernando, University of Sevilla, Spain,  
`fsancho@us.es`
31. Sburlan Dragoş, Constanţa University, Romania,  
`dsburlan@gmail.com`
32. Sempere Luna José María, Polytechnical University of Valencia, Spain,  
`jsempere@dsic.upv.es`
33. Vaszil György, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary,  
`vaszil@sztaki.hu`
34. Verlan Sergey, University of Paris 12, Creteil, France,  
`verlan@univ-paris12.fr`
35. Yokomori Takashi, Waseda University, Japan,  
`yokomori@waseda.jp`
36. Zandron Claudio, University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy,  
`zandron@disco.unimib.it`

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Gheorghe Păun  
Mario de Jesús Pérez-Jiménez  
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