

Laudatio for Oliviero Stock as a DFKI Fellow, 25 January 2019

Wolfgang Wahlster

Dear Oliviero, dear SAB Members, dear Colleagues,

Oliviero Stock has served as a member of our Scientific Advisory Board since 2004. Oliviero was as a long-term Mentor for seven projects of my Intelligent User Interface Department: MIAMM, SPECTER, Shared Life, Carmina, SiAM, Madmacs, and currently Tractat. I always admired your precise questions, your support for young DFKI researchers and your inspiring comments and recommendations for our DFKI projects.

In many mentoring sessions at DFKI, you could point our researchers to a new relevant research result that you or your team in Trento had achieved. Your very dense international network was extremely useful for DFKI: Oliviero served always as an ambassador for DFKI while he was visiting other top-notch research centers worldwide.

We thank Oliviero for his help to recognize some of our senior researchers as DFKI Research Fellows by preparing various letters of recommendation for our candidates.

I have known Oliviero and his work for more than 35 years since the beginning of his research career in the mid 80ties. Oliviero is a world authority on intelligent user interfaces for museums and other cultural heritage applications. You are one of the top five researchers worldwide in the field of intelligent user interfaces. You are the clear leader for applications in cultural heritage and cultural tourism.

Oliviero is not only an outstanding AI researcher from Trento and was a very successful research manager at FBK-irst, but also a friend with a great personality who is interested in many diverse subjects beyond science: history, politics, arts, food and sports.

Oliviero, our careers have much in common: we are both AAI and EurAI Fellows, we have both received the highest recognition of the autonomous Province of Trento, the Eagle of Saint Wenceslaus, and

we were both serving as presidents of ACL, the worldwide Association for Computational Linguistics, and ECCAI, the European AI Association, now called EurAI.

In 2001, Oliviero started his famous PEACH project in Trento together with Andreas Butz, Antonio Krueger and myself –actually you made sure that DFKI receives a project contract from the autonomous province of Trento for that work. Peach has been displayed in the Saarland and on the German TV in 2002 and a Springer book was published reporting about this most advanced AI-based multimodal museum guide.

In 2002, we founded a joint center in Trento called CELCT that was owned by FBK-irst and DFKI. For more than 10 years, we cooperated for numerous European and industrial projects on advanced language and communication technology.

Your early ALFRESCO system for multimodal access (speech combined with gestures) to multimedia information on Italian frescos is now seen as a seminal landmark for multimodal man-machine interfaces. Your interdisciplinary outreach to disciplines far away from computer science like drama theory and social psychology is truly exceptional.

You founded the field of computational humor in Europe, with an emphasis on the computational interpretation and generation of verbal humor. Oliviero headed the first European project ever on artificial humor HAHAAcronym.

Oliviero was an extremely successful director of FbK-irst. Under your leadership IRST has become one of the three most important and internationally most visible AI research centers in Europe. In 2010, you were one of the founders of the Trento Node of EIT Digital (European Institute of Innovation and Technology). We both served on the executive board of EIT Digital.

I am very happy that Paolo Traverso, who has followed Oliviero in the director role at FBK-irst, has accepted to follow Oliviero also as a member of our SAB, so that we have continuity in the personal mentality, the spirit and the friendship with our colleagues from Italy. Thank you very much Paolo.

Oliviero will soon receive an extraordinary recognition: an honorary doctorate at the University of Haifa – a long overdue recognition for his excellent support and research cooperation between Italy and Israel.

However today, it is my great pleasure to award to you another important certificate honoring you as a DFKI Fellow, the highest recognition DFKI has to offer. On behalf of all my colleagues at DFKI, the DFKI supervisory board and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, I would like to thank Oliviero for his great support of DFKI over the past 15 years.

Oliviero, I have proposed you to our Federal Ministry for Education and Research as one of the reviewers of German AI Research Centers and hope that you can accept this invitation. That would guarantee a close contact to and the possibility to support DFKI in the coming years.

Here is the certificate, which you share with other pioneers of computer science like Bob Kowalski, Alan Bundy, Erik Sandewall, Jaime Carbonell, and Markus Gross.

Congratulations.

Dear Oliviero and dear Donia, as a farewell gift we selected the mobile mini robot COZMO with 4 motors, a display, a camera, various position sensors, a Wifi interface, face recognition software and an open-source SDK, which you can use with Python to program the robot. After your retirement, you can use COZMO to transform your home office into a research lab for advanced human-robot interaction.

Oliviero, I am looking forward to your book about the turbulent history of your family and many pleasant meetings with you and our families in the coming years.

Thank you very much for your attention.