

COST-GEMINI 2009
2nd General Meeting
Alghero, Italy

ORGANISERS REPORT

When we were invited to organise the II Annual GEMINI Meeting I was sailing along the Alghero coast. I was very happy to finally have some relaxing time after a very busy period. So I said yes suddenly and did not consider how much time was necessary to organise such meetings! This I discovered later! The other reason that convinced me to accept the invitation was to give the chance for many friends to visit our beautiful Sardinia and in particular Alghero with its long and beautiful beaches, historical buildings and warm weather.

The selection of the meeting venue was the first point to consider. Fortunately Alghero offers several opportunities but we spent a few days trying to find the right place according to our view. We thought that it would be strategic to have a conference centre inside the town to leave the participants to choose their preferred hotel and, a part of the meeting program, time to visit Alghero town. The Conference took place in Quartè Sayal, a former 17th century convent fully restored in 2008 and transformed in a modern Conference Centre. All participants appreciated the location, the organization and the tasty meals!

Another complication was to find sponsors available to support the meeting and give us the chance to offer as much as possible to the participants. Due to the global economical problem we were only able to have the support of our Rector that offer us to pay all the expenses related to the meeting book program. So calculating only the amount of money from the registration fee and the small amount of Cost Action we work very hard to reduce and negotiate any costs related to the meeting organization. For these reasons many things were organized by our self and to assure a suitable welcome for the 120 participants, scholars and PhD students were involved in each phases of the meeting from the registration desk up to the assistance in the lecture room. The biggest hurdle was to assign the proper size and colour of T-shirts to each participant. Unfortunately, sizes of t-shirt had been requested on the basis of the body build of Sardinian people which is notoriously shorter than the other European citizens. Moreover, a lot of people asked for red t-shirts which were only assigned to the staff organisers. We recommend considering these suggestions for the next meeting. We do not know how it was possible but after precise calculations we were able to save some money that gave us great pleasure to assign some money for local grants for poster presenters not covered by COST grants.

Another complication was the speakers' invitation. Speakers sometime are special as they do not care so much about reservations and what is around the meeting organization. As a result we did not know exactly their travel and accommodation arrangements until the beginning of the meeting, however, in the end, magically, everything ran well and they arrived safe and in time. Our target was to create a family environment so people were "strongly" stimulated to reserve the meals at the conference venue publishing all the details about food and drinks (it was mainly sea food). We had great pleasure as we saw that almost all the participants decided to stay together during the refreshment breaks and enjoyed what had been proposed.

At the end of the last oral communication, (fortunately everything was OK) we received as Local Organizing Committee (LOC) the kind congratulations from the COST-GEMINI chairman Dr

Alireza Fazeli for a successful meeting and declared to rename Dr Sergio Ledda as “Il Maestro” (The Master) for his organisational skills!

The Meeting ended with a Gala Dinner at Le Pinnette, the name given to the old rural stone buildings, with cane roofs, that were used as shelters by the shepherds or for equipment, as well as places where craftsmen first began working the products they obtained through stock-rearing. A platform next to the patio allowed participants to dance and enjoy live performances of Alireza’s dancing!

On that occasion, every participant sung a funny Happy Birthday in its proper mother tongue to celebrate Sergio Ledda’s birthday.

The final goal was to bring people close to each other. For this purpose, a one day excursion was organised at the beautiful Neptune Caves, one of the most important naturalistic places in Sardinia. This was a risk because the weather in this period sometime is not stable so we were consulting all the time forecast web sites, fishermen and professional skippers! We were lucky and we had a beautiful sunny day with a calm sea.

For the majority of contributors, accustomed to cold and rainy falls, the warm and sunny day was a not to be missed opportunity to swim and sunbathe. In spite of master's warning, several participants swam straight after lunch...fortunately without consequences and so we will have all the friends in the next COST-GEMINI meeting.

The LOC(Local Organizing Committee)
and “Il Maestro”