

# Evaluation of the Joint Meetings of the Econometric Society and the European Economic Association

## 1. Introduction

In the Summer of 2001, the European Standing Committee of the Econometric Society (ES) and the Council of the European Economic Association (EEA) decided to organise the 2003 European Meeting of the Econometric Society (ESEM) and the EEA Congress in parallel rather than one after the other, following the proposal in a report by an ad hoc committee of Birgit Grodal (Chair), Torsten Persson and Rafael Repullo (included as Appendix 1 to this document). These bodies also decided to repeat the experiment in 2004, if a suitable venue could be found. Finally, the same committee would make an evaluation of the new format, based on the experience of EEA-ESEM'03, so as to assist the decision in 2004 on how to arrange the meetings from 2006 onwards. The present report contains our evaluation.

As a crucial input in the evaluation, we decided to conduct an electronic survey of the participants in EEA-ESEM'03. We first sent a draft of the survey for comments to the members of the ES European Standing Committee and the EEA Council. In its revised form (included as Appendix 2) this survey was then sent to all the participants of the Stockholm meetings. About 700 of them responded, which gives a response rate of 47%. We are grateful to Ian Walker, Secretary of the EEA, for conducting the on-line survey and for tabulating the results.

Section 2 of this report presents the main features of the parallel meetings. Section 3 summarises the views of the participants in EEA-ESEM'03 (with more complete tabulations of the results reported in Appendix 3). Section 4 contains our evaluation and recommendation.

## 2. The parallel meetings

The organisers of EEA-ESEM'03 implemented the proposal in the Grodal-Persson-Repullo report with minor changes, so in what follows we briefly describe the set-up at Stockholm University.

EEA-ESEM'03 lasted 4½ days instead of the 7 (3 + 4) days in the previous sequential arrangement. The scientific program comprised three time slots for plenary sessions organised by the EEA (the Presidential Address, the Schumpeter Lecture, and the Marshall Lecture), three slots for plenary sessions organised by the ES (the Presidential Address, the Fisher-Schultz Lecture, and the new Review of Economic Studies Lecture), three slots for parallel invited sessions, and nine slots for parallel contributed paper sessions, five of them (in the morning) of 1½ hours each, and the remaining four (in the afternoon) of 2 hours each. The session schedule was as follows:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
REStud	IS1	IS2	IS3	CS9
CS1	CS3	CS5	CS7	Marshall
CS2	CS4	CS6	CS8	
Schumpeter	ES PA	EEA PA	Fisher-Schultz	

In the three time slots for invited sessions, the EEA scheduled a total of 13 sessions, while the ES scheduled a total of six sessions. Moreover, the EEA included a 14th invited session in a contributed session slot. Thus, the EEA exceeded the maximum of three parallel sessions per organisation suggested in the Grodal-Persson-Repullo report.

In the nine time slots for contributed sessions, the EEA scheduled a total of 132 sessions plus 25 poster sessions (with an average of 17.4 sessions per slot), while the ES scheduled a total of 142 sessions (with an average of 15.8 sessions per slot). Again, the EEA went slightly beyond the Grodal-Persson-Repullo suggestion of no more than 16 parallel sessions. Most of the papers in both the EEA and ESEM contributed sessions were allocated 30 minutes for presentation.

To avoid duplication of refereeing, authors were asked not to submit the same paper to more than one (EEA or ESEM) Programme Chair. Moreover, to allow for ample participation, each participant was limited to presenting at most one paper in each meeting (a total of two). The programme committees of the two organisations had to deal with close to 2850 submissions: 1560 to the EEA and 1282 to ESEM (692 papers to econometrics and empirical economics and 590 to theoretical and applied economics). To arrive at the desired number of sessions, taking into account expected withdrawals, the programme chairs applied similar acceptance rates: 43% in the case of EEA and 44% in the case of ESEM.

Comparison of these figures to those of earlier meetings is not completely straightforward, as both the format of the meetings and the one-paper-per-meeting rule were new to Stockholm. The sequential Venice meetings of 2002 represented an all-time high with a total of 3883 paper submissions to the two organizations (EEA 2235 and ESEM 1648). Taking the 622 “double submissions” in 2002 into account, submissions to the Stockholm meetings were 14% lower than to the Venice meetings. Even so, the Stockholm acceptance rates were higher (in the case of the EEA considerably higher), than the Venice ones. Compared to the 2001 Lausanne meetings, on the other hand, the number of submissions to Stockholm was about 15% higher (2840 vs. 2500), even without taking double submissions into account (we don't have the data to do so), and the acceptance rates lower. According to the reports from programme chairs the contributed papers to the Stockholm meeting was, if anything, of higher quality than in previous years.

Grodal, Persson and Repullo had proposed that the parallel meetings be based on an equal sharing between the two organisations, not only in the allocation of sessions but also in the joint costs and revenues. As for the latter, the local organisers of EEA-ESEM'03 followed the suggestion of a three-fold fee structure: a normal registration fee of SEK 2,500 (approximately EUR 275) for members of either the ES or the EEA, a reduced student member fee of SEK 1,500 (approximately EUR 165), and a higher non-member fee of SEK 3,500 (approximately EUR 390). Non-members of either association were offered the possibility of joining the ES or the EEA, obtaining the right to register at the normal fee. Also, the usual 50% penalty for late registration was applied.

The joint surplus  $S$  of the meeting was computed as the difference between the joint revenues (registration fees plus the funds raised by the local organisers) and the total costs, that is  $S = F - C - C_{ES} - C_{EEA}$ , where  $C$  denotes the joint costs of the meeting and  $C_{ES}$  and  $C_{EEA}$  denote the specific costs of the ES and the EEA. The division of this surplus between the two organisations took into account their corresponding exemptions from paying registration fees, denoted  $W_{ES}$  and  $W_{EEA}$ . That is,

$$S_{ES} = \frac{1}{2} (F + W_{ES} + W_{EEA} - C) - C_{ES} - W_{ES}$$

was allocated to the ES, and

$$S_{EEA} = \frac{1}{2} (F + W_{ES} + W_{EEA} - C) - C_{EEA} - W_{EEA}$$

was allocated to the EEA. Since the sponsors of EEA-ESEM'03 required that any surplus was to be returned, the final accounts had  $S = S_{ES} + S_{EEA} = 0$ . However, since the EEA exempts many more participants than the ES from paying registration fees, the final balance was  $S_{ES} = -S_{EEA} = \text{EUR } 6,753$ . This amount was transferred by the EEA to the European Fund of the ES.

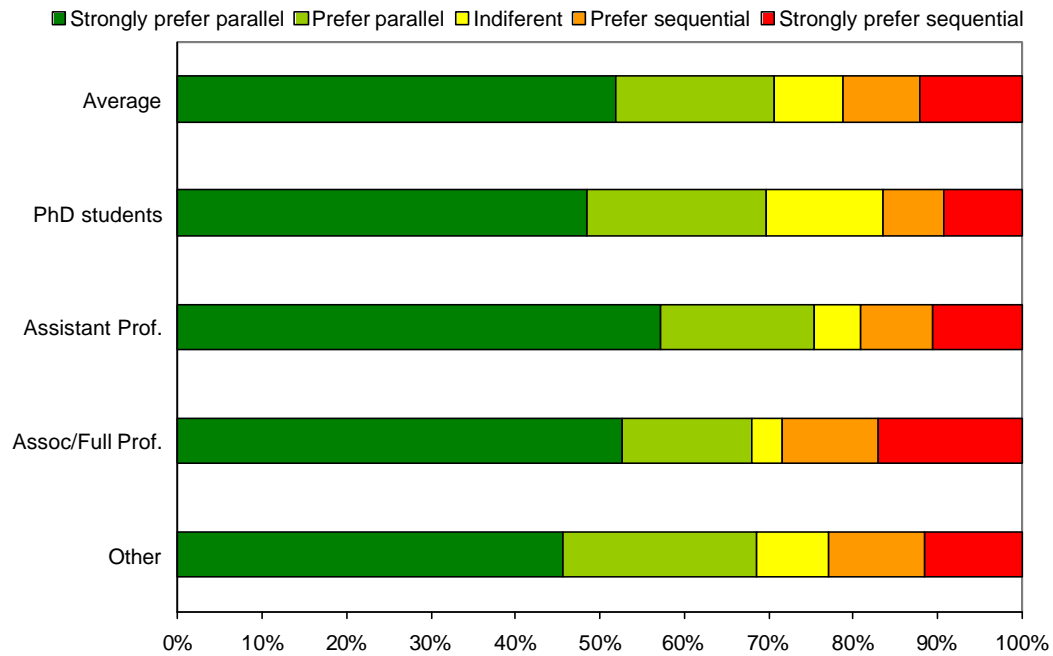
At the time we are drafting this evaluation, the final preparations for the 2004 parallel meetings at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, are taking place. In brief summary, the organization of this year's scientific programme closely resembles that in Stockholm. The total submission of contributed papers – about 2850 – as well as its breakdown per organization (and per the two parts of the ESEM programme), is conspicuously similar to the year before. In collaboration with the local organisers, the 2004 programme committee chairs have adopted similar acceptance rates, aiming at a meeting of about the same size as in 2003. The registration fees are the same as those of last year.

### 3. The views of the participants

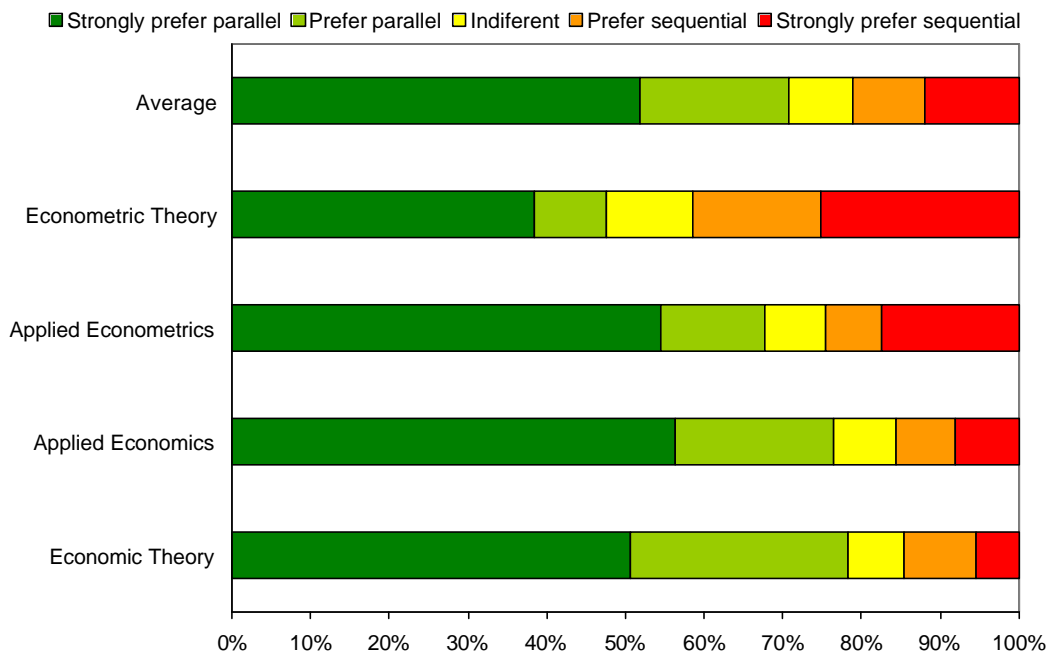
The respondents to the electronic survey were strongly in favour of retaining the new format in future meetings: 52% expressed a strong preference for parallel meetings, with a further 19% reporting a weak preference. Only 12% and 9% of the respondents expressed, respectively, strong and weak preferences for sequential meetings. As illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, these views vary neither with the professional status of the participant, nor with his/her major field of specialisation, except for the category of econometric theorists (about 100 out of 700 respondents) for whom the preference for the new format was marginal. (The size of the various groups can be found in the

tables of Appendix 3, which present selected survey results in greater detail.)

**Figure 1: Preferences by professional status**



**Figure 2: Preferences by major field of specialization**



Looking closer into the matter, it turns out that the preference for sequential meetings among econometric theorists is concentrated in the category of Associate or Full

Professors (see Table 3, Appendix 3), some of whom felt that “EEA has little to interest an econometric theorist,” that “there were too few sessions in econometrics” or that “lots of good papers (in econometric theory) were rejected because of lack of space.”

Figure 3 shows the preferences according to the meetings attended in the last few years. The participants with stronger preference for parallel meetings are those attending both EEA and ESEM in the same year. As one participant in this group put it “attending both conferences takes otherwise too much time.” Comparing those attending mostly EEA with those attending mostly ESEM, we find that the preference for parallel meetings is stronger in the former group. This is due to the strong preference for sequential meetings among econometric theorists attending mostly ESEM. Interestingly, a large majority of *economic* theorists attending mostly ESEM prefer the parallel format. (See Table 6, Appendix 3.)

**Figure 3: Preferences by meetings attended in last few years**

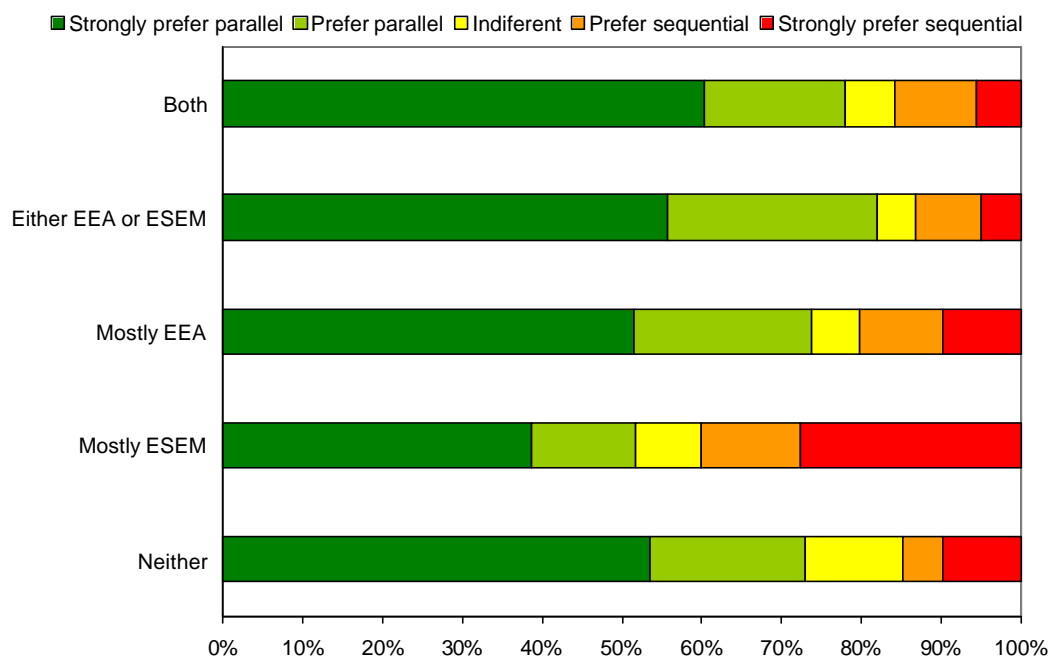


Figure 4 shows the preferences according to the paper presented in Stockholm. The participants with stronger preference for sequential meetings are those that presented a paper in an EEA session, while the weakest preference is found in the group that did not present a paper.

**Figure 4: Preferences by paper presented in 2003**

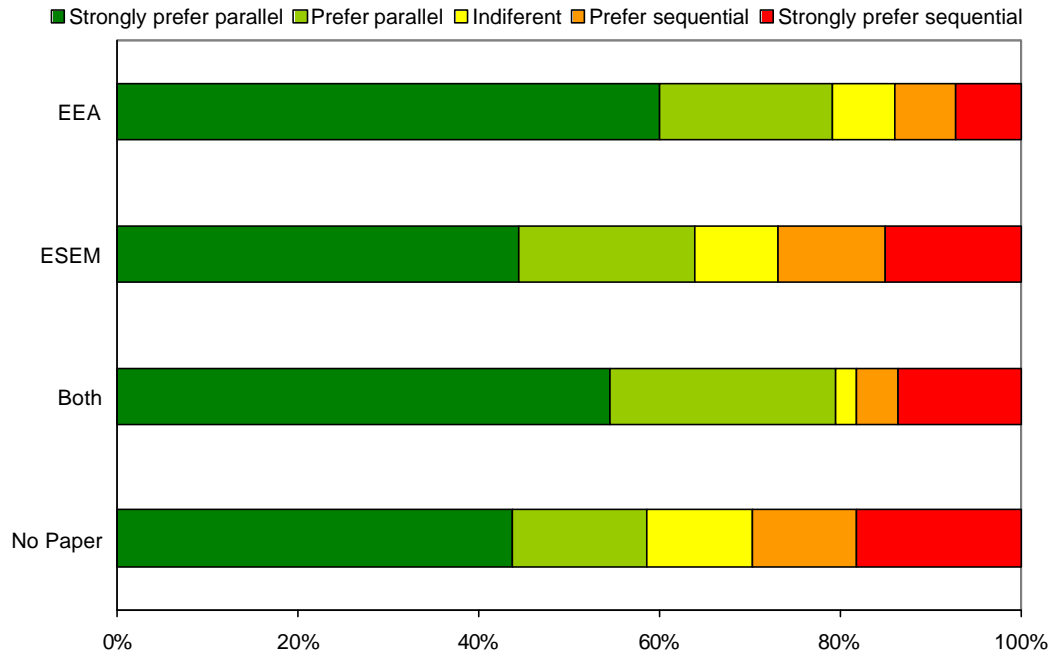
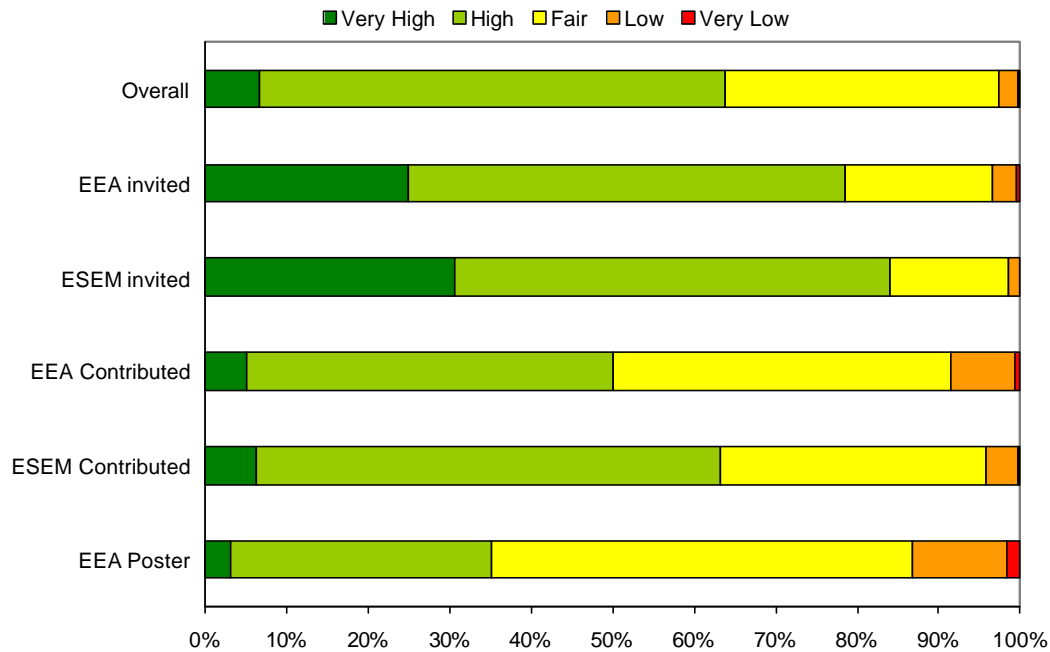


Figure 5 summarises the views of the participants on the quality of the sessions. 64% of the respondents thought that the overall quality was high or very high. ESEM invited sessions were considered of higher quality than EEA invited sessions (in terms of first-order stochastic dominance), and the same ranking was expressed for contributed sessions. As for EEA poster sessions, 52% of the respondents thought that they were of fair quality. Interestingly, the views on quality of the more senior participants (i.e., those in category of Associate or Full Professors) were very similar to those of the entire sample.

A large majority of the respondents expressed support for a number of organisational features of the meetings. In particular, 69% said that their length (4½ days) was about right (with 25% saying they were too long), 69% said that their timing (20-24 August) was about right (with 24% saying they were too early), 75% said that the balance between invited and contributed sessions was about right (with 15% in favour of more invited sessions), 69% said that the number of parallel EEA invited sessions (about 4)

**Figure 5: Quality of sessions**



was about right (with 23% saying they were too many), 71% said that the number of parallel ESEM invited sessions (2) was about right (with 25% saying they were too few), and 85% said that the time allocated to each paper in contributed sessions (30 minutes) was about right (with 11% saying it was too short). The only question with more divided views concerned the number of parallel contributed sessions (about 32), where 47% of the respondents thought that it was about right, while 42% thought it was too high.

Finally, about a third of the respondents said that they presented a paper in a poster session (too many, given that only about 80 such papers were accepted) and another third that they attended a poster session. There was support for retaining EEA poster sessions for future meetings (48% in favour versus 21% against), and for having ESEM poster sessions in future meetings (44% in favour versus 27% against). These views were fairly uniform across professional status and major field of specialisation, but those who did not present or attend a poster session were less enthusiastic, with 30% in favour versus 25% against retaining EEA poster sessions, and 25% in favour versus 35% against introducing ESEM poster sessions in future meetings.



#### 4. Evaluation and recommendation

Our original report listed a number of arguments for and against arranging the meetings in parallel rather than sequential fashion. While the experience from a single completed meeting, and the planning of another one, is obviously too scant for a full-fledged evaluation, we believe it sheds light on some of these pros and cons.

Thus, the drawbacks imposed by a larger meeting in terms of greater need for co-ordination and lessened flexibility for the programme chairs do not seem so serious; the software developments by WebMeets have been quite helpful in accommodating these demands. The trade-off between accommodating many presentations (particularly by young scholars) to encourage wide participation, on the one hand, and avoiding too much crowding of contributed sessions, on the other, has become more pronounced with the larger meetings. As Section 2 shows, the adjustment so far has been mainly on the crowding margin, and a large minority of the participants in Stockholm indeed found the number of contributed sessions too high. Increased use of poster sessions may be one way to ease this trade-off. While the views among the participants on the EEA's experiment in Stockholm were quite lukewarm, attitudes may change over time; the AEA's recent decision to introduce poster sessions in its 2005 congress will likely help de-stigmatise such presentations. As our original report pointed out, the sheer size of a 1500-economist meeting might exclude a number of prospective locations. But the Stockholm and Madrid meetings suggest that each European country may have at least a few universities capable of handling the logistics of parallel meetings. Keeping the meetings at about their current size, this implies that enough campus venues will be available to avoid, in the foreseeable future, resorting to the type of non-academic locations used for the ASSA meetings.

At the same time, the experience illustrates the main advantages of parallel meetings. In only 4½ days, the Stockholm programme offered a wide-ranging selection of high-quality plenary and invited sessions, which were also highly appreciated by the participants responding to the survey. Before the fact, the Madrid programme looks equally impressive. The vision of making the meetings a concentrated annual focal point of European economics, with increasing attraction for economists from other regions, does seem eminently achievable.

In our own view, the advantages of the parallel meeting format clearly outweigh the disadvantages. As Section 3 reveals, a large majority of the survey respondents also expressed support for the idea. Of course, participants of the 2003 meetings are not a random sample of European or non-European economists; moreover, those responding to the survey are not a random sample of the participants. Non-random selection could bias the answers in both positive and negative directions, however.

We propose that the EEA Council and the ES European Standing Committee in their meetings this summer approve another cycle of four parallel meetings for the period 2006 – 2009 (i.e., in between the next two ES World Congresses). We also propose that an ad hoc working group, with representatives from both organizations, be appointed to consider further improvements in the organisation of the parallel meetings. This working group may want to conduct a second survey of EEA and ES European members (and perhaps prospective members who are currently enrolled in European national organisations, such as the German Economic Association or the Royal Economic Society) on how to make the meetings more attractive. The second survey may be particularly useful to gather information on the views of the group with the lowest support for the parallel format, namely econometric theorists that mostly attended ESEM in the past

It is our belief that Birgit Grodal, a life-long provider of public goods to the academic community and a strong believer in international scientific cooperation, would have agreed with our conclusions. We deeply regret not being able to draw on her wisdom in this evaluation.

Torsten Persson

Rafael Repullo

## Appendix 1

# Report on the future organisation of the European Meetings of the Econometric Society and the European Economic Association (from July, 2001)

### 1. Background

At the meeting of the Executive Committee of the European Economic Association (EEA) in May 2001, Torsten Persson, Vice-President of the EEA and Member of the Council of the Econometric Society (ES), proposed to organise the European meeting of the ES and the EEA Congress in Stockholm in 2003. Moreover, he proposed that the meetings be held in parallel rather than one after the other. The Executive Committee was favourable to the proposal. It asked Persson to coordinate with the ES and to chair an EEA committee for preparing a proposal to the meeting with the EEA Council at the 2001 Congress in Lausanne. Persson informed Guy Laroque, President of the European Standing Committee of the ES, about the proposal. Laroque decided to set up a committee for looking into the pros and cons of the proposal as well as the way in which parallel meetings could be organised, and appointed Birgit Grodal (Chair), Persson, and Rafael Repullo to this committee. The proposal and this report will be discussed by the European Standing Committee of the ES at its meeting in Lausanne.

The report is organised as follows. Section 2 summarises the main features of the current situation. Section 3 presents a concrete blueprint for how parallel meetings might be organised. Section 4 discusses pros and cons of the proposal. Section 5 concludes.

### 2. The current situation

The Econometric Society European Meeting (ESEM) currently lasts for 4 days, and is organised by two Programme Chairs, one for Economic Theory and one for Econometrics, and a local organising committee. The Chairs appoint Programme Committees of about 30-40 people each. Submissions are sent to the appropriate Programme Chair, and are evaluated by one of the members of the corresponding

Committee. Selected papers go into 9 blocks of about 22 parallel sessions (in 2001), which last for 1½ or 2 hours. Each session is devoted to three or four papers, making the total number of contributed papers accepted about 620 (average for 1996-1999). In addition, there are 4 slots in which an invited session in Economic Theory and an invited session in Econometrics are held in parallel, a joint invited session, plus the Fisher-Schultz lecture and the Presidential Address. This makes a total of 16 (9+4+1+2) time slots. Participants are typically from universities and research centres. The number of participants is about 750 (average for 1996-1999).

The Congress of the EEA lasts for 3 days. It is organised by a Programme Chair who appoints a Committee of about 50-60 people and a local organising committee. Submissions are sent to the Programme Chair, and are evaluated by one of the members of the Committee. Selected papers go into 6 blocks of about 30 parallel sessions lasting for 1½ or 2 hours. In each session, three or four papers are presented, making the total number of contributed papers accepted about 590 (average for 1996-999). In addition, there are 3 slots with 3 parallel invited sessions (in 2001), plus the Joseph Schumpeter and the Alfred Marshall lectures, and the Presidential Address, which makes a total of 12 (6+3+3) time slots. Participants are mostly from universities and research centres, with the addition of some people from ministries, central banks and financial institutions. The number of participants is about 780 (average for 1996-1999).

Except for the years when ES has its World Congress, the two meetings have been held as back-to-back meetings at the same conference venue, with only two exceptions. The local organising committee has then been common for the two meetings. Some coordination between the meetings and sharing of common costs takes place through this committee.

Although both meetings are very successful, one sometimes hears negative remarks. Some of these are the following.

- The meeting is too big and crowded (both meetings).
- Too many parallel sessions of contributed papers (both meetings).
- Not enough senior economists participate (both meetings).
- Too few invited sessions/special lectures in ESEM (previously).
- The invited sessions in EEA are of variable quality (previously).

- The econometrics and economic theory parts of the ESEM are too separated.
- It takes too much time to go to both meetings in sequence.

In response to these complaints, the ESEM organisers have introduced more invited sessions (item 4) and a joint invited session for Economic Theory and Econometrics (item 6). The European Standing Committee has decided to waive registration fees for speakers and discussants of invited sessions (item 3). Moreover, poster sessions as well as increases in the rejection rate have been discussed (item 2), but not agreed for fear of deterring participation (for funding reasons) among those who cannot present papers. Similar discussions have been held in the EEA. The EEA has also decided to cut down on the number of B-sessions (item 5). To save time (item 7), the European Standing Committee as well as the Council of EEA have discussed to increase the overlap between the two yearly meetings.

The proposal discussed in the next section directly addresses the last complaint, even though it has additional motivations. Indirectly, it also addresses some of the other complaints mentioned above.

### 3. The proposal

The proposal by Persson is that the European Standing Committee and the Council of EEA decide to run an experiment, where the two meetings are run fully in parallel (not only with partial overlap). Clearly, such parallel meetings raise issues of coordination between the two organisations, concerning the allocation of sessions as well as the sharing of costs and revenues. To show how these problems could be resolved in practice, we present a concrete proposal of a blueprint for a “Parallel EEA-ES European Meeting”, including a discussion of organisational and financial implications.

The ESEM certainly has a longer tradition, with the first meeting held in 1932, while the EEA Congress started only in 1986. At the present time, however, the two meetings have roughly equal academic standing and attract a similar number of participants (see above). For these reasons, our specific proposal below is based on an equal sharing between the two organisations both when it comes to the allocation of sessions and the joint revenues and costs.

*Structure of the meeting*

We start with the scientific contents. The EEA has three "A-sessions" (Presidential Address and the Schumpeter and Marshall lectures), while ESEM only has two (Presidential Address and the Fisher-Schultz lecture). To put the number of ESEM A-sessions on par, we propose raising the status of the joint invited session in Economic Theory and Econometrics. If the proposal is accepted, the Standing Committee may want to give this new lecture a suitable name (and perhaps seek some external funding). Given this amendment, there are six A-sessions that should be scheduled as singular events. Keeping that in mind, inclusion of a sufficient number of contributed sessions requires that the meetings last 4½ days. A possible session schedule is the following:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
CS1	CS3	CS5	CS7	CS9
New ESEM Lecture	IS1	IS2	IS3	Marshall
CS2	CS4	CS6	CS8	
Schumpeter	ES PA	EEA PA	Fisher-Schultz	

In this schedule there are 9 slots for contributed paper sessions. The five morning slots could be of 1½ hours each, while the four afternoon slots could each last for 2 hours. In each of these slots, each organisation would schedule a *maximum* of 16 parallel sessions, so there would be a total maximum of 32 parallel sessions. Assuming that each paper is allocated 30 minutes, we get a maximum of 496 (5x16x3 + 4x16x4) contributed papers for each organisation. This number is a bit smaller than current numbers, but one has to take into account that a few papers are currently presented in both meetings.

The proposed schedule has 3 slots for invited sessions of 1½ hour each. In each slot

each organisation would schedule a *maximum* of 3 parallel sessions. This would allow each organisation to maintain the status quo (of 2001), namely 8 for ES and 9 for the EEA. Each organisation could, of course, structure these sessions as they like, e.g., one speaker plus discussant in the case of the ES and two or three speakers in the case of the EEA.

As in the current arrangements, ES sessions could be organised by two Programme Chairs and the EEA sessions by a single Programme Chair. However, this is clearly up to each organisation. Also, perhaps the European Standing Committee might want to take this opportunity to rename the two parts of the ES programme in the context of two parallel meetings.

To avoid duplication of refereeing, authors would be asked not to send the same paper to more than one (ES or EEA) Programme Chair. Moreover, to allow for ample participation, each participant would be limited to presenting at most one paper in each meeting (a total of two).

#### *Financial arrangements*

What about the financial implications? We propose that participants register to "The Parallel Meetings of ES and EEA". The following three-fold fee structure would be maintained: a normal registration fee for members of either ES or EEA, a reduced student fee, and a higher non-member fee (applying the usual 50% penalties for late registration). As today, participants would be offered the possibility of joining either ES or EEA, obtaining the right to register at the normal fee. The registration fees plus the funds raised by the local organisers would constitute the *joint revenues*  $F$  of the two meetings.

Many of the expenses would go into the *joint costs*  $C$  of the meetings. This would be the case for, say, joint receptions, setting up of a local website, payments to local congress services, and other public goods offered by the local organising committee. In addition, each organisation would have *specific costs* for its part of the programme to be charged against the revenue of the meeting, denoted  $C_{ES}$  and  $C_{EEA}$ . These could encompass e.g., the costs of invited and A-lectures, Programme Committees, dinners, etc. (If, say, the ES has outside funding for part of its own programme – such as the support from ES general funds for the Presidential Address – these funds do not enter into  $F$ , nor do the corresponding costs enter into  $C_{ES}$ .)

The *joint surplus*  $S$  of the meetings would then be the difference between the joint revenues and the sum of the joint and the specific costs, that is  $S = F - C - C_{ES} - C_{EEA}$ . The division of this surplus between the two organisations would take into account their corresponding exemptions from paying registration fees, denoted  $W_{ES}$  and  $W_{EEA}$ . In particular, the surplus allocated to ES would be

$$S_{ES} = \frac{1}{2} (F + W_{ES} + W_{EEA} - C) - C_{ES} - W_{ES},$$

while the surplus allocated to EEA would be

$$S_{EEA} = \frac{1}{2} (F + W_{ES} + W_{EEA} - C) - C_{EEA} - W_{EEA}.$$

Thus, each organisation's surplus is protected from any revenue consequences caused by exceptions of the other. Of course,  $S = S_{ES} + S_{EEA}$ , so the joint surplus is equal to the sums allocated to each organisation.

Clearly, there has to be some coordination between the two organisations in the budgeting phase especially concerning the level of the registration fees, which has to be set such that each organisation can cover their programme specific costs. The common registration fees would then have to be set in trilateral bargaining with the local organising committee. Now, fees are set in bilateral bargaining between each organisation and the local committee.

These funding and accounting principles are based on the principle of equal sharing discussed above. They are also designed to avoid strategic behaviour (of the tax competition or common-pool type).

#### 4. Pros and cons of the proposal

The main arguments in favour of the proposal are the following:

- (1) Parallel meetings would hopefully increase the interaction between economists working on theory and policy, and between those working on econometric methods and empirical applications. This would be a most important consequence of the proposed reform.



- (2) Related to this, participants now attending one of the meetings (or no meeting at all) could choose sessions from a richer menu of topics, enabling current ESEM participants to learn more about recent applied work, and EEA participants to learn more about recent methodological breakthroughs.
- (3) Such parallel meetings might become a natural focal point of economics in Europe. The number of singular events (the A-sessions) would increase and become comparable to the world congresses of the ES. This would make the meetings more attractive for junior and senior members of the profession from both Europe and the rest of the world. Some people presently not going to any of the meetings are likely to participate.
- (4) Another likely quality improvement concerns the EEA and ES invited sessions. Higher potential attendance and stiffer competition should lead to higher quality both in the selection of and preparations by invited speakers.
- (5) Fewer contributed sessions in each meeting are also likely to raise average quality. This would address the complaints of lacking quality of the present meetings.
- (6) People who attend both meetings would save time, benefiting from a richer set of sessions at each point in time (in total, of course, they could attend fewer sessions). These participants would also face lower accommodation expenses and registration fees because of sharing the fixed costs among a larger number of participants.

The main arguments against the proposal are the following:

- (1) Parallel meetings might blur the identity of each organisation, with one of the two (or even both) losing as a result.
- (2) Smaller conference venues would not be able to host two large meetings at the same time; the binding constraint would likely be the number of available hotel rooms rather than the meeting venue itself. A reduction in the number of possible venues may be important given that there has not been much competition in recent years for organising these events.

- (3) The meetings, seen together, will be even larger and more crowded than the existing ESEM and EEA congress. The maximum number of parallel sessions will be larger than in any of the existing meetings. The increase is marginal in the case of the EEA congress, but not so in the case of ESEM.
- (4) The parallel meetings will take more time than any one of the existing meetings, marginally in the case of ESEM, non-marginally in the case of the EEA congress.
- (5) Parallel meetings require more coordination between the two organisations, regarding programme planning and financing, which could lead to conflicts. However, our blueprint proposal suggests one way these can be resolved. Moreover, the greater need for coordination diminishes the flexibility of each Programme Committee in adapting the programme to the actual flow of contributed papers, e.g., by converting a contributed session into an invited session or by extending the number of parallel contributed sessions.
- (6) A Parallel EEA-ES European Meeting in line with the blueprint above is likely to raise the number of people presenting a paper at both meetings and will cut the total number of contributed sessions. This is likely to decrease the number of young people presenting a paper in either EEA or ESEM, which might decrease the number of young people attending (compared to the present sum of young participants in EEA and ESEM).

## 5. Conclusion

This report has examined the proposal to move from the current format of the European meetings of the ES and the EEA to true parallel meetings. Although we could have made a similar examination of an intermediate proposal with a two-day or even a three-day overlap, we decided to focus on just two alternatives. Comparing present-style back-to-back meetings to parallel meetings, the latter would hopefully bring major benefits like (i) increasing the interaction between theoretical and applied researchers, and (ii) creating a natural focal point for economics in Europe. The main drawbacks may be that (i) parallel meetings blur the identity of each organisation, and (ii) smaller conference venues would not be able to host two large meetings at the same time.

To sum up, we think that the movement to parallel meetings would make participation more useful and attractive for both senior and junior members of the profession. Hence, there would be a gain for participants, as long as suitable venues could be found. However, the EEA or the European Region of the Econometric Society may lose part of its identity.

The alternatives that the European Standing Committee has to consider are thus:

- (1) To maintain the current arrangements.
- (2) To make an experiment with parallel meetings in 2003 and 2004 – conditional, of course, on approval by the EEA Council – along the lines sketched in the blueprint above, and to review the decision for 2006 and beyond at the 2004 meeting.

If the experiment is accepted, some practical issues will have to be tackled already in the planning of the Stockholm 2003 meetings. These will come up in the ES European Standing Committee and the EEA Executive Committee during the coming year.

Birgit Grodal

Torsten Persson

Rafael Repullo

## Appendix 2

# Questionnaire to evaluate the 2003 European Meetings of the Econometric Society and the European Economic Association at Stockholm University

### 1. Country of residence

- Scandinavia and Baltic States
  - Sweden
  - Finland
  - Denmark, Iceland, Greenland
  - Norway
  - Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania
  - NA
- Other EU
  - Spain
  - Portugal
  - France
  - Italy
  - Greece
  - Austria
  - Germany
  - Netherlands
  - Belgium
  - UK
  - NA
- Other Western European
  - Switzerland
  - NA
- Eastern Europe
  - Russia, Former Soviet States
  - Poland, Czech Rep, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania
  - Balkan States
  - NA
- Middle East
  - Turkey
  - Israel
  - Other Middle East
  - NA
- Americas
  - US
  - Canada
  - Central America
  - South America
  - NA
- Other
  - Australasia, Oceania
  - Africa

- Asia
- NA

## 2. Professional status

- PhD student or post-doctoral researcher
- Assistant professor (or equivalent)
- Associate or full professor (or equivalent)
- Other

## 3. Major field of specialization

- Econometric theory
- Applied econometrics
- Applied economics
- Economic theory

## 4. Meetings attended in the last few years

- EEA as well as ESEM, both meetings in same year
- EEA and ESEM, but only one meeting in any given year
- Mostly EEA
- Mostly ESEM
- Neither of them

## 5. Paper presented in 2003 meetings

- EEA
- ESEM
- Both EEA and ESEM
- No paper presented

## 6. Parallel meetings EEA-ESEM

- Strong preference for retaining format in future meetings
- Weak preference for retaining format in future meetings
- Indifferent
- Weak preference for returning to previous format (sequential meetings)
- Strong preference for returning to previous format (sequential meetings)

## 7. Main consideration in preferred choice

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## 8. Quality of sessions

	Very high	High	Fair	Poor	Very poor
Overall (EEA + ESEM)	•	•	•	•	•
EEA invited sessions	•	•	•	•	•
EEA contributed sessions	•	•	•	•	•
EEA poster sessions	•	•	•	•	•
ESEM invited sessions	•	•	•	•	•
ESEM contributed sessions	•	•	•	•	•

## 9. Length of meetings (4½ days)

- Too short
- About right
- Too long

## 10. Dates of meetings (20-24 August)

- Too early
- About right
- Too late

## 11. Balance between invited and contributed sessions

- Too few invited sessions
- About right
- Too few contributed sessions

## 12. Number of parallel EEA invited sessions (about 4)

- Too few
- About right
- Too many

## 13. Number of parallel ESEM invited sessions (2)

- Too few
- About right
- Too many

## 14. Number of parallel contributed sessions (about 32)

- Too few
- About right
- Too many

15. Time allocated to each paper in contributed sessions (30 minutes)

- Too short
- About right
- Too long

16. Did you attend or present a poster session?

- Presented paper
- Did not present paper but attended
- Did not attend

17. What do you think of the idea of having EEA poster sessions?

- Retain for future meetings
- Indifferent
- Discard for future meetings

18. What would you think about having ESEM poster sessions in future?

- Yes
- Indifferent
- No

19. Other comments and suggestions

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## Appendix 3

### Tabulated summary of survey results

Table 1: Preferences by professional status

Would you prefer parallel to serial meetings?	Professional status				Total
	PhD stude	Assistant	Assoc/ful	Other	
Strongly prefer parall	115 48.52	114 57.29	102 52.58	32 45.71	363 51.86
Prefer parallel	50 21.10	36 18.09	30 15.46	16 22.86	132 18.86
Indifferent	33 13.92	11 5.53	7 3.61	6 8.57	57 8.14
Prefer serial	17 7.17	17 8.54	22 11.34	8 11.43	64 9.14
Strongly prefer serial	22 9.28	21 10.55	33 17.01	8 11.43	84 12.00
Total	237 100.00	199 100.00	194 100.00	70 100.00	700 100.00

Table 2: Preferences by major field of specialisation

Would you prefer parallel to serial meetings?	Major field				Total
	EtricTheo	ApplEtric	ApplEcon	EconTheor	
Strongly prefer parall	38 38.38	91 54.49	141 56.40	93 50.54	363 51.86
Prefer parallel	9 9.09	22 13.17	50 20.00	51 27.72	132 18.86
Indifferent	11 11.11	13 7.78	20 8.00	13 7.07	57 8.14
Prefer serial	16 16.16	12 7.19	19 7.60	17 9.24	64 9.14
Strongly prefer serial	25 25.25	29 17.37	20 8.00	10 5.43	84 12.00
Total	99 100.00	167 100.00	250 100.00	184 100.00	700 100.00



Table 3: Preferences of econometric theorists by professional status

Would you prefer parallel to serial meetings?	Professional status				Total
	PhD stude	Assistant	Assoc/ful	Other	
Strongly prefer parall	17 50.00	6 33.33	9 27.27	6 42.86	38 38.38
Prefer parallel	3 8.82	2 11.11	1 3.03	3 21.43	9 9.09
Indifferent	7 20.59	3 16.67	1 3.03	0 0.00	11 11.11
Prefer serial	4 11.76	2 11.11	8 24.24	2 14.29	16 16.16
Strongly prefer serial	3 8.82	5 27.78	14 42.42	3 21.43	25 25.25
Total	34 100.00	18 100.00	33 100.00	14 100.00	99 100.00

Table 4: Preferences by meetings attended in last few years

Would you prefer parallel to serial meetings?	Meeting usually attend				Neither	Total
	Both EEA	Either ES	Mostly EE	Mostly ES		
Strongly prefer parall	99 60.37	34 55.74	69 51.49	56 38.62	105 53.57	363 51.86
Prefer parallel	29 17.68	16 26.23	30 22.39	19 13.10	38 19.39	132 18.86
Indifferent	10 6.10	3 4.92	8 5.97	12 8.28	24 12.24	57 8.14
Prefer serial	17 10.37	5 8.20	14 10.45	18 12.41	10 5.10	64 9.14
Strongly prefer serial	9 5.49	3 4.92	13 9.70	40 27.59	19 9.69	84 12.00
Total	164 100.00	61 100.00	134 100.00	145 100.00	196 100.00	700 100.00

Table 5: Preferences of those attending mostly EEA by major field of specialisation

Would you prefer parallel to serial meetings?	Major field				Total
	EtricTheo	ApplEtric	ApplEcon	EconTheor	
Strongly prefer parall	3 60.00	12 85.71	44 50.57	10 35.71	69 51.49
Prefer parallel	0 0.00	0 0.00	19 21.84	11 39.29	30 22.39
Indifferent	1 20.00	0 0.00	6 6.90	1 3.57	8 5.97
Prefer serial	1 20.00	2 14.29	7 8.05	4 14.29	14 10.45
Strongly prefer serial	0 0.00	0 0.00	11 12.64	2 7.14	13 9.70
Total	5 100.00	14 100.00	87 100.00	28 100.00	134 100.00

Table 6: Preferences of those attending mostly ESEM by major field of specialisation

Would you prefer parallel to serial meetings?	Major field				Total
	EtricTheo	ApplEtric	ApplEcon	EconTheor	
Strongly prefer parall	10 20.83	24 46.15	6 40.00	16 53.33	56 38.62
Prefer parallel	4 8.33	7 13.46	3 20.00	5 16.67	19 13.10
Indifferent	2 4.17	4 7.69	2 13.33	4 13.33	12 8.28
Prefer serial	10 20.83	3 5.77	1 6.67	4 13.33	18 12.41
Strongly prefer serial	22 45.83	14 26.92	3 20.00	1 3.33	40 27.59
Total	48 100.00	52 100.00	15 100.00	30 100.00	145 100.00

Table 7: Preferences by paper presented in 2003

Would you prefer parallel to serial meetings?	Presented paper in 2003				Total
	EEA	ESEM	Both	No paper	
Strongly prefer parall	185 60.06	101 44.49	24 54.55	53 43.80	363 51.86
Prefer parallel	59 19.16	44 19.38	11 25.00	18 14.88	132 18.86
Indifferent	21 6.82	21 9.25	1 2.27	14 11.57	57 8.14
Prefer serial	21 6.82	27 11.89	2 4.55	14 11.57	64 9.14
Strongly prefer serial	22 7.14	34 14.98	6 13.64	22 18.18	84 12.00
Total	308 100.00	227 100.00	44 100.00	121 100.00	700 100.00

Table 8: Meetings attended in last few years by professional status

Meeting usually attended	Professional status				Total
	PhD stude	Assistant	Assoc/ful	Other	
Both EEA and ESEM	60 25.32	48 24.12	41 21.13	15 21.43	164 23.43
Either ESEM or EEA	17 7.17	21 10.55	17 8.76	6 8.57	61 8.71
Mostly EEA	37 15.61	42 21.11	41 21.13	14 20.00	134 19.14
Mostly ESEM	26 10.97	39 19.60	69 35.57	11 15.71	145 20.71
Neither	97 40.93	49 24.62	26 13.40	24 34.29	196 28.00
Total	237 100.00	199 100.00	194 100.00	70 100.00	700 100.00

Table 9: Meetings attended in last few years by major field of specialisation

Meeting usually attended	Major field				Total
	EtricTheo	ApplEtric	ApplEcon	EconTheor	
Both EEA and ESEM	24 24.24	39 23.35	52 20.80	49 26.63	164 23.43
Either ESEM or EEA	3 3.03	18 10.78	19 7.60	21 11.41	61 8.71
Mostly EEA	5 5.05	14 8.38	87 34.80	28 15.22	134 19.14
Mostly ESEM	48 48.48	52 31.14	15 6.00	30 16.30	145 20.71
Neither	19 19.19	44 26.35	77 30.80	56 30.43	196 28.00
Total	99 100.00	167 100.00	250 100.00	184 100.00	700 100.00