Minutes of the Exceptional SPHERIC Steering Committee meeting

Meeting 1 (5th of February 2026) - Online

SC members present:

Renato Vacondio (RV), University of Parma, Italy (Chair)
Ben Rogers (BR), University of Manchester, UK (Vice chair)
Matthieu de Leffe (MdL), Siemens Digital Industry Software, France
Salvatore Marrone (SM), CNR-INSEAN, Italy
Peng-Nan Sun (PNS)*, Sun Yat-sen University, Zhuhai, China*
Abbas Khayyer (AK), Kyoto University, Japan
Tom de Vuyst (TDV) University of Hertfordshire, UK (Secretary),
Angelo Tafuni (AT), New Jersey Inst. Technology, USA (webmaster)
Corrado Altomare (CA), Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain
Xiangyu Hu (XH), Technische Universität München (UM), Germany
Chun Hean Lee (CHL), University of Glasgow, UK
Shreyas Joshi (SJ), Fifty2 Technology, Germany
Guillaume Oger (GO), Ecole Centrale Nantes/CNRS*, France*

SC co-opted member present:
Zhen Chen (ZC) Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China

Early-career representatives present:
Efstathios Chatzoglou (EC) University of Thessaly, Greece
Clement Dufour ((Ecole Centrale Nantes, France) - CD

In Attendance:
Mike Owen (MO), Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, USA

Not present
Giuseppe Bilotta (GB), INGV, Italy

1. 2026 SPHERIC World Conference San Fransisco cancellation

RV explained the meeting was organised to discuss the issue of the 2026 SPHERIC World Conference planned for this June in San Francisco. RV stated only 38 abstracts were received and this was not sufficient to organise the conference in the planned format as a high quality event. MO added that the previous week some deadlines related to the conference venue and hotel. It was therefore necessary to cancel the 2026 SPHERIC World Conference in San Francisco. MO stated that this cancellation had not resulted in any financial penalties. RV stated that during the meeting the SC committee should discuss the cancellation of the event or postponement and subsequent organisation of a replacement event at a

later date. BR stated that for the reputation of SPHERIC it is better not to run the event rather than run it and damage the reputation of SPHERIC.
CA confirmed that in the past conference 82 abstracts were received and proposed that in the future accessibility of the event should be carefully considered.
PNS and CZ confirmed that postponing the 2026 event would have minimal influence on next year's event in Shanghai, and the data of the Shanghai event can be adjusted if needed.
The SC voted unanimously to not proceed with the organisation of the SPHERIC World Conference in San Francisco.
RV expressed his gratitude to Mike Owen for the effort and quality of the work organising the San Francisco event, and stated that the shortfall in abstracts received was an issue that in no way related to the quality of Mike's work.

2. Organisation of a replacement event

RV stated that the next topic of the meeting would be discussing and deciding how to minimise the damage of the cancellation of the San Francisco event.

RV stated that his preference was for an event in Europe as there are currently fewer travel constraints. MdL added that we should focus on where the SPH community is currently located: mainly in Europe and China. CA added that an event in a Schengen country would make it easier for researchers within that area to travel. EC stated that the SC should communicate clearly why the San Francisco event was cancelled, and CZ added that we should consider the geographic location of the people who did submit and abstract. CA added it was important to act quickly as time is very limited to organise a new event.

RV proposed potential dates for a new event to be late 2026 or early 2027. PNS stated that January 2026 would be preferrable to a date in September due to the start of the new academic year then. The SC then discussed the potential options for organising a replacement event:
AK proposed that Mehmet Yildiz could be contacted to organise the event in Istanbul. AK and RV will discuss contacting him **(ACTION).**
BR stated that they could potentially organise the event at Manchester. They have experience organising the event and they have a suitable large room available, smaller rooms for parallel sessions needs to be investigated further.
SM stated that Rome could be a backup option but this would require support from another organisation to handle things conference fees and registration. CA proposed CIMNE could be an organisation that could perform this task. RV queried if SJ could take on this role. SJ will check internally if this is an option **(ACTION).**
AT stated that Mashy Green from UCL may be able to host the event. TDV added that being located close to London he could support Mashy Green. TDV will also check the feasibility to host the event at UH.
GO, MdL are not in a position to organise the event in the timescale required.

3. Discussion of Next Steps

AT proposed, that due to the limited time available, to keep working with the existing subcommittee. The SC agreed.
It was agreed people who submitted an abstract and the keynote speakers would be informed by MO

would be informed of the decision to cancel the San Francisco event. The SC also agreed that abstracts submitted would be retained for the replacement event and people who submitted an abstract would also be informed of this. MO will target next week to do this **(ACTION)**. AT also stated that people who are booking travel could also be affected if information on the cancelation is not made public promptly. For the replacement event the Special Issue of CPM associated to the event will be retained.

It was agreed the potential replacement event organisers are:
1. University of Manchester as proposed by BR
2. Mehmet Yildiz as proposed by AK,RV
3. Rome as proposed by SM, with potential support from CIMNE or Fifty2 Technology
4. Mashy Green at UCL as proposed by AT, with potential support from TDV

It was agreed that people in the list above should proceed to check feasibility of formally taking on organising the event and check suitable venues, ideas for social event and establish an estimate of the likely fees **(ACTION).**

The SC agreed to reconvene in two weeks' time, 20th of February to discuss progress on this. RV will schedule the meeting **(ACTION).**

4. Summary of Actions:

ACTION(SJ): Check if Fifty2 Technology can support SM with conference fees and registration for potential replacement event in Rome

ACTION(MO): Inform people that submitted abstracts for California Conference of cancellation and option to retain abstract for replacement event.

ACTION (BR, AK(Mehmet Yildiz), SM, AT(Mashy Green), TDV): It was agreed that people in the list in paragraph 3. Identified as potential replacement event organisers should proceed to check feasibility of formally taking on organising the event and check suitable venues, ideas for social event and establish an estimate of the likely fees.

ACTION (All,RV): The SC agreed to reconvene in two weeks' time, 20th of February to discuss progress on this. RV will schedule the meeting.

Minutes of the Exceptional SPHERIC Steering Committee meeting

Meeting 2 (20th of February 2026) - Online

SC members present:

Renato Vacondio (RV), University of Parma, Italy (Chair)
Ben Rogers (BR), University of Manchester, UK (Vice chair)
Matthieu de Leffe (MdL), Siemens Digital Industry Software, France
Salvatore Marrone (SM), CNR-INSEAN, Italy
Peng-Nan Sun (PNS)*, Sun Yat-sen University, Zhuhai, China*
Abbas Khayyer (AK), Kyoto University, Japan
Tom De Vuyst (TDV) University of Hertfordshire, UK (Secretary),
Angelo Tafuni (AT), New Jersey Inst. Technology, USA (webmaster)
Corrado Altomare (CA), UPC, Spain
Chun Hean Lee (CHL), University of Glasgow, UK
Shreyas Joshi (SJ), Fifty2 Technology, Germany
Guillaume Oger (GO), Ecole Centrale Nantes/CNRS, *France*

SC co-opted member present:
Zhen Chen (ZC) Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China

Early-career representatives present:
Clement Dufour (Ecole Centrale Nantes, France) - CD

Not present
Giuseppe Bilotta (GB), INGV, Italy
Efstathios Chatzoglou, University of Thessaly , Greece
Xiangyu Hu (XH), Technische Universität München (UM), Germany

1. 20th SPHERIC World Conference

RV gave an overview of the work of the Conference sub-committee over the past two weeks. Following the previous meeting four options were considered:
1. University of Manchester
2. Event in Turkey (Prof. Yildiz)
3. CNR/Fifty2 in Rome
4. UCL London (with potential support from University of Hertfordshire (UH))

RV explained the subcommittee worked on all these options and two of them turned out to be most feasible: CNR/Fifty2 and UCL. RV also received an outline proposal from UH. The sub-committee's

preferred option is a CNR/Fifty2 organised event in Rome, Italy.

SM provided a brief overview of the plans for the event in Rome. This would be co-hosted by CNR-INM, Fifty2 Technology and La Sapienza. The conference venue would be the Engineering Faculty of LA Sapienza in San Pietro. SM proposed 1-4 February as the dates, constrained by availability of the room(s). SM provided a timeline for all important dates in the run up to the conference and a detailed preliminary budget. SJ confirmed Fifty2 Technology will participate in the organisation and they will handle administrative task such as payment. The location of the conference dinner is to be determined.

AT provided an update on the work on the UCL option with Mashy Green. The event would be organised in UCL's East Campus where there is a 250 people venue. No budget estimates were available.

TDV provided an overview of a possible event at UH (date & location, type of conference rooms, conference dinner, feasibility in terms of cost). TDV later stated that this information was based initial internal discussions at UH, but that things like room availability and detailed budget breakdown would need to be checked.

After a short discussion the SC reached consensus to proceed with the event in Rome (**Action CNR-INM/Fifty2 Technology**).

GB raised the issue of announcing the new event. A new newsletter is due to be released in 2 or 3 weeks' time. The SC agreed that the event in Rome should be announced in this forthcoming newsletter, and it was agreed that Mike Owen (MO) should be involved in the drafting of the announcement **(Action CNR-INM/Fifty2 Technology MO GB).**

AK stated that the dates proposed are difficult for Japanese faculty members as there is a travel ban on faculty members that period due to exams.

2. 2028 Event

RV then raised the potential organisation of the 2028 event in Australia by Daniel Price. RV questioned whether this was still a good option. GB stated that in his opinion the distance to Australia is not issue. GO added that after changing the 2026 SPHERIC conference location and date changing it again would reflect very badly on SPHERIC. AT added that organising the 2026 event in the US was a risk and in his opinion 2028 is not the right time to take another risk with Australia. GO also raised the issue of cost and potentially environmental impact. BR asked what CD's opinion is on the environmental impact. CD responded he would check with the SPHERIC young researcher's community to gauge their views **(ACTION CD).** CZ proposed that the Shanghai event could be postponed as a backup for the Australia event if it is decided not to hold it there. CZ added that there would be no danger of needing to cancel an event in Chania due to the amount of contributions they can guarantee.
AK stated that the 2028 event should be held in the middle of the year and proposed the possibility of organising a survey among SPHERIC members to gauge their preference.
The SC agreed the SC would contact Daniel Price to discuss the issue of a 2028 Australia event **(ACTION RV).** The SC committee also agreed that in parallel alternatives to a 2028 event in Australia would be developed **(ACTION sub-committee).**
GB stated that care should be taken not to schedule the Shanghai workshop and 2028 World Conference too close together.

TDV stated that he would take some time to gather more detailed information on a possible event at UH.
RV concluded the meeting by recapitulating that the SC agreed that the 20th SPHERIC World Conference would be organised in Rome and that the date, venue and organising committee has been agreed.
The SC expressed their thanks to SM and SJ for their effort so far and their engagement to take on the organisation of this event at short notice and on a tight timeframe.

3. Summary of Actions

ACTION(SM,SJ): Organise 20th SPHERIC World Conference in Rome beginning of 2027.
ACTION(SM,SJ,MO,GB): Draft announcement on the cancellation of California Conference and replacement with Rome Conference
ACTION(CD): Gather feedback from early-career researcher on potential 2028 event in Australia.
ACTION(RV): Contact Daniel Price regarding a 2028 SPHERIC World Conference in Australia.
ACTION(Conference sub-committee?): Continue to develop alternatives to 2028 Conference in Australia.