

Richard Sendi: 10 years of involvement in the New Housing Researchers Colloquium



Ten years ago, in 2009, CC member Richard Sendi was installed as 'Contact person for the New Housing Researchers Colloquium'. The Coordination Committee (CC) of the ENHR recognised the need to pay special attention to facilitate its better functioning and enhance its attractiveness to potential participants. The key tasks of the contact person were defined as: "providing first-hand information to potential participants, providing basic support to NHRC organisers and proposing recommendations to the ENHR CC for necessary improvements regarding the functioning of the NHRC."

Providing assistance

"All potential participants can turn to me for information regarding the NHRC" Richard explains his work as contact person in a nutshell. "The questions that I have received over the years relate mostly to age limit, the venue of the next NHRC, what stage of PhD studies is admissible, joint participation with university supervisor, membership of the ENHR, accommodation and the like."

But that is not all. In addition to providing support Richard designed and conducted surveys on the views and impressions of participants in all the NHRC that have been organised since 2011. "The findings of the survey, together with the

corresponding recommendations for improvement, are presented to the CC. While all previous surveys have, generally, indicated a pretty high level of satisfaction with most of the aspects of the organisation of the NHRC, there have been a few issues that have been frequently identified as a cause of dissatisfaction. The most important among these is the lack of sufficient time for the discussion of papers. To this effect, NHRC workshops are scheduled in such a way that each participant has a minimum of 30 minutes for presentation and discussion of their paper. Consequently, there has been noticeable improvement in this regard in recent years. Furthermore, 'Guidelines for NHRC mentors' have been designed which include written feedback on presentations, intended to help participants improve the quality of their paper or research. We have also, during this time, designed and provided guidelines for writing a working paper as well as guidelines for preparing a research presentation, all intended to make easier the preparatory work for participating in the NHRC."

Twenty NHRC editions

Since the first 'Young Housing Researchers Seminar' (the forerunner of the NHRC) in 1992, twenty NHRC have been organised to date. The average attendance level at NHRC is about 50 participants, Richard knows, with the record attendance so far recorded at 105 participants. Some have attended more than one NHRC.

A large majority of the participants is, normally, already members of the ENHR prior to participating in the NHRC, while most of the few that are not, usually indicate the intention to become members. Most importantly, several of the university professors and senior researchers that today actively participate in ENHR conferences have previously participated in the YHRS or NHRC, at the beginning of their professional career.

"Although the CC had advised, in 2000, that the NHRC be held every second year, NHRC events have been often consecutively organised, nonetheless. This may be seen as an indication of the desirability of the NHRC. In addition, the frequency of the requests I receive for information on the NHRC certainly is another indicator of the potential appeal of the NHRC to new researchers."