

## Preface to the *EURO Journal on Decision Processes*

Ahti Salo · Marja Makarow

Published online: 30 April 2013

© Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg and EURO - The Association of European Operational Research Societies 2013

The fates of institutions, organizations and even individuals are largely governed by the decisions they make and put into action. In an increasingly interconnected and fast-paced world, these decisions have become more complex while the stakes have grown. For instance, in order to attain competitive advantages, firms may have to reach high-quality decisions more quickly than their rivals; regulators must account for a broader range of impacts to ensure the safety of products and processes; and policy makers are expected to recognise a greater variety of concerns and perspectives when charting pathways for the future. Thus, for example, research councils emphasise objectives that transcend narrower notions of research quality as they urge researchers to generate new scientific knowledge for the benefit of society at large.

Against this backdrop, research that seeks to improve decision processes by way of modelling has exceptional leverage: for it is at this very juncture where results from different disciplines are combined with modelling activities to inform decisions that shape the future. Here, the complexity of decision problems and the quest for decision quality make it necessary to draw appropriately on the entire suite of approaches that lie at the heart of operational research. These approaches range from the ‘softer’ methods such as problem structuring, decision analysis and decision aiding to more quantitative methods like performance measurement, cost-efficiency analysis, simulation, forecasting and optimisation. For all these methods, issues of process design, model validity and communication are crucial: the quality

---

M. Makarow served as Chief Executive of the European Science Foundation in the period of 2008-2011.

---

A. Salo (✉)

Aalto University, Aalto, Finland

e-mail: euro-journal-on-decision-processes@aalto.fi

M. Makarow

University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

of a decision process is not a narrow property—it is largely determined by its fit with an external reality that is populated by decision makers and other stakeholders.

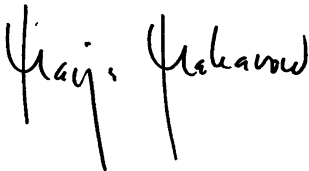
In this context, *EURO Journal on Decision Processes* is a unique publication outlet for high-quality research on the many uses of operational research and quantitative modelling in supporting decision processes. This journal not only presents novel methodological advances, but it also shows how such advances can be deployed in areas such as energy, engineering, environment, finance, health care and operations management, among others. Furthermore, the journal describes reflective case studies which help understand determinants of successful decision modelling and thus contribute to the diffusion of best practices.

With this remit, we are pleased and even privileged to invite researchers and practitioners to read this journal, confident that papers in it offer valuable insights and serve as a source of inspiration for future work. We also encourage researchers working in this area to submit some of their best work to this journal through which it will be effectively communicated to appreciative readers.

December 2011



Ahti Salo  
Editor-in-Chief of  
the EURO Journal on Decision Processes  
Professor, Aalto University



Marja Makarow  
Chief Executive of  
the European Science Foundation, 2008-2011  
Professor, University of Helsinki