

A challenging future

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After our university has celebrated its 55th birthday in 2011, it is now Thor's turn to have festivities. And, in line with what our government is promoting, with only 55 years it is by no means yet time to retire for Thor... In this book you will read not only about Thor's last year's activities, but also about its rich history. Thor has chosen the theme 'Hora ruit, tempus fluit – the hour melts away, time flies'. Not only the Romans knew that things may change quickly. The ideas of the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus (around 500 BC) were already phrased by Plato as 'παντα ρει και ουδεν μενει – everything moves, nothing stays', exemplified by 'you can never step twice in the same river'. We can observe that the technology rivers even today are floating faster and faster... And electrical engineering is in the middle of these dynamics: it is a vital discipline to feed our information-hungry society, it holds the keys to unlock a more sustainable society with more efficient use of resources and more efficient generation of energy, and last but not least it continuously improves our quality-of-life (well, there may be some very rare people who do not agree...). But the river keeps floating; there are still many challenges ahead,

including bringing all these nice technologies to fruition in other disciplines and other regions. That is particularly important in difficult economic times as we are experiencing presently. Technical innovations bring new jobs, and may make other jobs obsolete, but the consensus is that the net result is an increase of jobs. Technology should also be such that it does not create a 'digital divide', separating those who know how to use it from those who do not. So making technology not only more powerful but also more easy-to-understand and easy-to-enjoy should be first priority on our wishlist. With its activities Thor contributes its fair share to that. Our discipline is therefore still alive-and-kicking, and so is and should remain Thor!

I do wish the reader many enjoyable moments with this Lustrum year book. Congratulations to Thor with its 55th anniversary, and best wishes for the many years to come!

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