The 21st Iberoamerican Congress on Pattern Recognition CIARP 2016 (Congreso IberoAmericano de Reconocimiento de Patrones), held during November 8–11, 2016, was the 21st edition of a yearly event organized by scientific associations of Iberoamerican countries in this field. In this special anniversary edition, as in previous years, the congress received contributions from many countries beyond Iberoamerica. The papers presented research results in the areas of pattern recognition, biometrics, image processing, computer vision, speech recognition, and remote sensing to name a few. The papers tackle theoretical as well as applied contributions in many fields related to the main topics of the conference. In this way, CIARP 2016 continued the tradition of an event that fosters scientific exchange, discussions, and cooperation among researchers.

CIARP 2016 received 131 contributions authored by researchers from 29 countries, 11 of which are Iberoamerican countries. These contributions were reviewed in a double-blind process and 69 papers were accepted. Following tradition, CIARP 2016 was a single-track conference in which 35 papers were selected for oral presentation and 34 were presented in poster sessions. The type of presentation did not imply quality differences. The poster sessions were organized by topic to encourage discussions among authors and attendees.

The IAPR-CIARP Best Paper Award recognizes outstanding contributions and is aimed at acknowledging excellence and originality of both theoretical contributions to and practical applications in the field of pattern recognition and data mining. On the other hand, the CIARP Aurora Pons-Porrata Award is given to a living woman in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the field of pattern recognition or data mining.

Beside the presentation of the 69 selected contributions, four keynotes were given by Professors Yann LeCun (Director of AI Research, Facebook Founding Director of the NYU Center for Data Science), B.S. Manjunath (Director, Center for Bio-image Informatics, University of California), Xiaohui Liu (Design and Physical Sciences, Department of Computer Science, Brunel University London), and George Azzopardi (Intelligent Computer Systems, ICT Faculty University of Malta). CIARP 2016 was organized by the Peruvian Association for Pattern Recognition, including members from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, with the endorsement of the International Association for Pattern Recognition (IAPR) and the sponsorship of the following national associations: Argentine Society for Pattern Recognition (SARP-SADIO), the Special Interest Group of the Brazilian Computer Society (SIGPR-SBC), the Chilean Association for Pattern Recognition (ACHiRP), the Cuban Association for Pattern Recognition (ACRP), the Mexican Association for Computer Vision, Neural Computing and Robotics (MACVNR), the Spanish Association for
Pattern Recognition and Image Analysis (AERFAI), Uruguayan Association for Pattern Recognition (AURP), and the Portuguese Association for Pattern Recognition (APRP). We acknowledge the work of all members of the Organizing Committee and of the Program Committee for the rigorous work in the reviewing process.

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César Beltrán Castañón
Ingela Nyström
Fazel Famili
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