

# Preface

The 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Chemical Societies of the South-Eastern European Countries (ICOSECS-4) was held in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro, from 18–21 July 2004, at the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, University of Belgrade. These conferences have become a biennial event: the first two were held in Halkidiki, Greece (1998 and 2000), and the third in Bucharest, Romania (2002).

ICOSECS-4 was organized by the Serbian Chemical Society on behalf of the Society of Albanian Chemists, Union of Chemists of Bulgaria, Pancyprian Union of Chemists, Association of Greek Chemists, Society of Chemists and Technologists of Macedonia, Chemical Society of Montenegro, and Romanian Chemical Society.

The title of the conference was *Chemical Sciences in Changing Times: Visions, Challenges and Solutions*. Within this broad title, there were contributions from all areas of chemistry. However, the main focus of the conference was reflected in three symposia:

- Advanced materials: From fundamentals to application
- The greening of chemistry: Pursuit of a healthy environment and safe food
- Teaching and understanding chemistry: New concepts and strategies for changing times (dedicated to 150 years of teaching chemistry in Serbia)

The meeting was organized under the auspices of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), the Federation of European Chemical Societies (FECS), the Ministry of Science and Environmental Protection of Serbia, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The president of IUPAC, Leiv Sydnes, and the president of FECS, Gabor Naray-Szabo, attended the conference and addressed the participants.

Some 600 researchers from 26 countries took part in the conference. One of the reasons for this large attendance lies in the fact that the organizers of these conferences (the chemical societies of South-East Europe) have declared a commitment to keep the registration fee as low as possible. In comparison with prevailing fees at similar meetings, the ICOSECS-4 registration fee of 80 euros can be considered really modest; it included the book of abstracts, the welcome reception, a city sightseeing tour, and the conference dinner!

The scientific program featured five plenary lectures:

- John Fenn, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, USA, the 2002 Nobel Laureate: “Electrospray wings for molecular elephants”
- Peter Atkins, Oxford University, Oxford, UK: “Modern trends in chemical education”
- C. N. R. Rao, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bangalore, India: “New directions in the chemical design of materials”
- Egon Matijevic, Clarkson University, Potsdam, USA: “Mechanisms of formation of uniform fine particles and their applications”
- Ivano Bertini, University of Florence, Florence, Italy: “From genomes to cellular mechanisms and drug design”

In addition to the plenary lectures, the program included 38 invited lectures and 25 oral and 437 poster presentations. Brief summaries of all contributions were published in a two-volume book of abstracts.

As already mentioned, the organizers put together a rich social program, which included a welcome reception in the historic City Hall (featuring a recital of the Simonuti Trio), a boat sightseeing tour of Belgrade, and a conference dinner with live music and dancing.

The next conference, ICOSECS-5, will be organized by the Society of Chemists and Technologists of Macedonia in 2006.

**Teodor Ast**

Conference Editor and Chairman of the International  
Scientific Committee