
Foreword

European Carbohydrate Symposia continue to attract a steadily increasing audience since their inception in 1980. The original idea discussed at ICS IX in London was to facilitate participation at international meetings of colleagues from eastern Europe; low fees and the opportunity to have meetings alternately organized at both sides of the iron curtain were main incentives. Times fortunately changed, and the participation is nowadays truly international, in close complementarity with ICS meetings. ECS I, organized in Vienna in September 1981 by Frank Unger, gathered 170 participants; at ECS XIV last September, 636 participants, including more than 200 students, from all over the world, joined in the exceptional surroundings of the hanseatic city of Lübeck. It is interesting to note that 28 years later, the University of Vienna again will host ECS XV on July 19–24, 2009.

This special issue of Carbohydrate Research, dedicated to ECS XIV, intends to present an attractive overview of this very successful meeting. It contains 31 contributions, including 1 Perspective article, 13 Reviews/Minireviews, 16 Full Papers and 1 Note, all based

on presentations at Eurocarb. Inclusive is a contribution of the winner of the fourth Carbohydrate Research award, Todd Lowary, which is part of the lecture that he presented at the opening session of the symposium, and of Peter Seeberger, previous prizewinner in 2005 at ECS XIII in Bratislava. The latter paper was delayed, partly due to the lack of special issue for the latter meeting, but is now updated. Interestingly, all four main fields of the meeting which focused on *Chemical and Enzymatic Synthesis*, *Structural Analysis*, *Biological Functions of Carbohydrates/Glycobiology*, and *Industrial Applications of Carbohydrates* are covered in this issue, which gives a timely overview of the research on these essential interdisciplinary areas. Special thanks are due to the 132 contributors from 16 countries for this special issue for their effort in presenting the latest developments in these rapidly moving domains of carbohydrate research.

Otto Holst
Jacques Defaye