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Proceedings of the 5th Euroconference on Environmental Analytical Chemistry Blarney, Ireland, 8-12 September 2001

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PREFACE

We have the pleasure to present to you in this volume selected papers of presentations from the 5th Euroconference on Environmental Analytical Chemistry (EUCON EAC 5). The Euroconference, which took place in the picturesque village of Blarney (near Cork) in Ireland was co-organised by the University College Cork and the Institute of Chemical Technologies and Analytics of the Vienna University of Technology. It was already the fifth meeting in a series of Euroconferences which are devoted to the presentation and the discussion of the progress achieved in fields of environmental analysis and chemistry of great current interest. Given the subtitle of this meeting, “The impact of (bio-)sensors and bioanalytical techniques in environmental analytical chemistry”, most of the invited and many of the contributed presentations discussed the potential for the use of sensors, based on biochemical or chemical recognition schemes and various signal transduction schemes in environmental analysis and environmental monitoring. And in fact, the progress in this field made over the past more than two decades is indeed very impressive: sensors and particularly biosensors can be considered as mature by now, and it is now the market that has to accept these devices. Unfortunately, only few biosensors have found wider commercial interest so far – and this is still mostly in the clinical or biomedical field. It is, however, expected that, with the ever increasing demand for environmental monitoring, for the availability of real-time data, and particularly for the assessment of effects rather than the determination of pollutants’ concentrations, the concept of biosensors (and bioanalytical techniques) will prove its advantage.

The Euroconference series is a high-level scientific conference sponsored under the European Commission’s programme “Improving Human Potential” (DG XII, contract no. HPCFCT-1999-00178). This allowed us to subsidise the participation of many young researchers who were attending to present results of their own cutting-edge research or to obtain a training in the particular topics and methods that were the subject matter of this conference. The special format of this meeting, where about one hundred conference participants were spending five days together in very close contact, gave rise to a very intensive and enthusiastic discussion and exchange of ideas, both during and outside the official conference programme. And although there was a very tight schedule for this meeting to accommodate the numerous presentations, the feedback of the participants was generally very positive, indicating that there was also enough time left to enjoy the social events and the very open and friendly atmosphere of the conference in this well-chosen setting.

This proceedings issue may not be able to capture the highly energetic and enthusiastic atmosphere of the meeting which was rewarding to all those who have attended, however, it summarises some of the most important results of the conference

for those that did not have the possibility to be present. I am very grateful to the publisher and particularly to the Editor-in-Chief, Prof. Albaiges, for the invitation and the possibility to publish the proceedings in this *Journal*. His support throughout the preparation of this volume was very helpful and his way of handling the manuscripts highly effective. My thanks are due to all the authors for submitting their work, as well as to all referees whose work was essential for the preparation of this issue and is very much appreciated.

I would like to emphasise that the Euroconference certainly would not have been this great success without the enthusiasm and the dedication of two persons: the Conference Chairman, Prof. George G. Guilbault, and the Conference Secretary, Dr Miloslav Pravda. It was their excellent ideas in the planning phase, their indefatigable energy when the conference was coming closer, the kind and efficient way of handling all administrative issues and, above all, their personality which made this conference a very special event and for which I am very grateful.

The conference closure was overshadowed by the tragic events of September 11, 2001. While scientists from more than 20 different countries have been discussing science for five days, the world has changed and is no longer the one that it was before. All those, however, who have been working together, discussing and exchanging their ideas, and listening to each other during this conference, know that the only way to continue is to show mutual respect and understanding. This is what we want to spread around and to communicate to our environment.

Erwin Rosenberg
Euroconference Series Co-ordinator