



Preface

As a branch of the pharmaceutical sciences, pharmaceutical technology deals with the development, preparation and evaluation of pharmaceutical formulations. The major part of the activities is focused on the development of new technologies for the manufacture of formulations and on the selection of excipients which would ensure optimal drug delivery in terms of extent and kinetics. Moreover, the study of drug transport and interaction mechanisms in biological systems of increasing complexity represents a precondition for the development of pharmaceutical formulations with optimal properties.

In the late 1980s, the initiative for Central European scientific meetings dealing with pharmaceutical technology arose as a result of the long-standing collaboration between the laboratories for pharmaceutical technology of the faculties of pharmacy in Trieste, Italy and Ljubljana, Slovenia. Three round table meetings were held, entitled Alpe Adria Seminars on Pharmaceutical Technology, and each had about 50 participants. Scientists contributing as speakers, co-authors or participants in discussions came from research and development laboratories of the pharmaceutical industry and universities of countries belonging to the then Alpe Adria Association. In 1993, when the Slovenian Pharmaceutical Society became a member of the European Federation for Pharmaceutical Sciences (EUFEPS), all conditions were fulfilled to follow the recommendations of EUFEPS assembly dedicated to the organization of regional thematic scientific meetings in Europe. As a result, the 1st Central European Symposium on Pharmaceutical Technology (CESPT) was held in October 1995 in Bled, Slovenia under the patronage of EUFEPS with the aim to promote the development of pharmaceutical sciences in the region. The two subsequent events, in 1997 and 1999 were successfully organized in Portoroz, Slovenia.

The 4th CESPT was organized in 23–25 September 2001 in Vienna, Austria by Professors H. Viernstein (Center for Pharmacy, University of Vienna, Austria) and A. Mrhar (Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia). It attracted more than 200 participants from academic, industrial and regulatory institutions from Central Europe and other European regions to discuss topics related to pharmaceutical dosage forms, pharmaceutical processes and transport and interaction studies. Many ideas were generated to better understand the integrity of this relationship and to facilitate rational design and development of advanced controlled and targeting drug delivery systems.

At the symposium, 154 contributions were made as oral and poster presentations and published in the form of two-pages abstracts. Subsequently, 22 authors representing various research groups were selected and asked to prepare full length papers to be included after review in the present special issue of *International Journal of Pharmaceutics*. We wish to thank Professor A.T. Florence and Elsevier for providing the opportunity to publish the proceedings of the meeting. We also want to thank the authors of the papers, as without their contributions this work would not be available to those who are interested in the progress of this fast growing scientific area.

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