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Foreword

On 26–29 October 1997 the *8th Symposium on Handling of Environmental and Biological Samples in Chromatography* and the *26th Scientific Meeting of the Spanish Group of Chromatography and Related Techniques* were held together in El Ejido, Almería, Spain. This city, with an important Arab history, has become one of the areas of highest production of fruits and vegetables in Europe.

The meetings were supported by the International Association of Environmental Analytical Chemistry (IAEAC) and the Group of Chromatography and Related Techniques (GCTA) of the Spanish Royal Society of Chemistry. The former has a major task in the promotion of new analytical methods for the increasing number of compounds of environmental interest and the latter gathers the active groups on chromatography, mass spectrometry and related techniques in Spain. This new meeting format introduced new ideas and experiences in the regular symposia of both Societies, motivating many scientists to develop collaborations within their fields of interest.

The symposium was attended by ca. 320 participants from around 35 countries, with the participation of 13 companies. The scientific program comprised 36 lectures and 248 poster presentations. The topics encompassed new developments in extraction procedures, gas and liquid chromatography and mass spectrometry coupled to these techniques. Important reviews and advances on solid phase membrane extraction, supercritical fluid extraction, immuno-sorbents and membranes were presented, showing

examples of application to food analysis and environmental and biological samples. Particular attention was given to pesticide monitoring programs and the results obtained in several European and American countries were reported. Quality assurance studies were also included. The poster presentations emphasized specific aspects of the oral communications and could be visited and discussed with the authors all days.

73 papers translated into written form the most relevant contributions reported to the meeting. The present volume collects 59 papers from the most relevant contributions presented at the meeting. These papers give a representation outline of the most innovative aspects of the research reported in the meeting. We would like to express our gratitude to M.C. Hennion (IAEAC), M. Galcerán, X. Guardino and E. Gelpí (GCTA) and to M. Frei-Häusler and A. Agüera for running the symposium smoothly and efficiently. Thanks are also due to the University of Almeria for its cooperation.

We would like to take advantage of this opportunity to announce the *9th Symposium on Handling of Environmental and Biological Samples in Chromatography*, which will be held from 10–13 October 1999 in Porto (Portugal).

Amadeo R. Fernández-Alba
Damià Barceló
Almeria and Barcelona, Spain. Joan O. Grimalt.