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Foreword

The ExTech 2001 symposium, dedicated to advances in extraction techniques, was held in Barcelona from 17 to 19 September 2001. The symposium was organized by Drs. J.M. Bayona and R. Alzaga and colleagues from the IIQAB-CSIC. It was the third symposium in the series, previously held at Waterloo University, Ontario (Canada) and organized by Professor J. Pawliszyn. The main focus of ExTech 2001 was molecular recognition-directed extraction techniques, including molecular imprinting techniques, bioanalytical and restricted access media, to deal with trace analysis of complex matrices. Although solid-phase microextraction was the best represented extraction format for aqueous samples, solid-phase extraction, membrane and micro liquid-liquid, in-tube and stir bar sorptive extraction techniques were also covered. For solid matrices, the developments were focused on the combination of microwave-assisted extraction, pressurized-liquid and sub/supercritical fluid extraction in preconcentration techniques in order to automate the sample handling steps and to reduce or even avoid solvent usage. Several papers were presented using subcritical water. The main focus of the applications was environmental, food, flavor and gas-phase odor-related compounds. As far as environmental applications were concerned, several analytical approaches were presented for the selective preconcentration of the truly dissolved contaminants.

Despite the fact that we had to regret the absence of the colleagues overseas due to the tragic events of 11th September, the meeting was very successful in

terms of quantity (over 200 attendees from 30 countries) and quality of participation. The interaction between participants and the discussions on both oral and poster presentations were also remarkable. A total of 46 oral and over 90 posters were presented along the three days of the symposium. We hope that the participants had enough time to enjoy the Mediterranean culture, cooking and wines.

In addition, two optional short courses were also organized in the CID-CSIC Institute on 20 and 21 September, covering both solid-phase microextraction and solid-phase extraction. The short courses were co-organized with Waterloo University and ESPCI colleagues with technical support of several enterprises.

The next, 4th, ExTech meeting will be organized by Professor Dr. Marie-Claire Hennion at the ESPCI in Paris, France from 3 to 5 July 2002 (<http://www.espci.fr/leca/extech.htm>). The focus of this 4th symposium will be on a fundamental understanding of extraction processes; this should result in greater selectivity and efficiency in method development, and in rationalization of method selection for specific applications. On-site environmental methods and biomedical applications will also be covered. The 2002 edition will also highlight sample preparation for biological systems and for nanotechnologies.

The ExTech 2003 venue is planned in Tampa, FL, USA.

Barcelona, Spain

J.M. Bayona