

Foreword

The *International Symposium on Preparative and Industrial Chromatography and Allied Techniques* (SPICA 2004) was held between 17 and 20 October 2004, at the facilities of the Eurogress Conference Centre in Aachen (Germany). It was the 10th event in a series of symposia, which started in Paris in 1986 and was then continued every two years in different locations in Europe. Between 19 and 22 October, the *24th International Symposium on the Separation of Proteins, Peptides and Polynucleotides* (ISPPP 2004) was also held in Aachen. As both communities have common areas of interest, the scientific committees of the two meetings decided to organise a joint day concerning “Stationary phases and column characteristics” on Wednesday 20 October.

During SPICA 2004, 35 lectures were presented and more than 75 posters exhibited.

The lectures were divided in five sessions focused on: (I) generic solutions in preparative chromatography—stationary and mobile phase screening models; (II) supercritical fluid chromatography; (III) simulated moving beds: modelling – optimisation and operation of industrial multicolumn chromatography systems – technologies for preparative chromatographic applications; (IV) allied techniques: Part 1, membrane technology and Part 2, liquid–liquid distribution—hybrid processes; (V) stationary phases and column characteristics (joint session with ISPPP 2004).

On Sunday 17 October, four well-attended short courses covering different aspects of the technology were organised. Simultaneously with the Scientific Program, an exhibition was organised, giving the participants the possibility to meet the world’s leading suppliers of materials and equipment for preparative chromatographic applications. Different manufacturers also organised seminars during the lunch breaks.

Many participants expressed their appreciation for the contributions of the scientists from industry, which provided the audience with a clear overview in the approach, optimisation and use of chromatographic processes on small and very

large industrial scale. For all scientists active in industry, certainly an encouragement to share more frequently their daily work with the International chromatographic society.

The different contributions related to multicolumn chromatography processes confirmed that meanwhile this technology has been generally accepted as a standard unit operation in industry. Furthermore, the sessions dedicated to allied techniques, clearly demonstrated that new concepts emerging in certain fields as for example continuous centrifugal partition chromatography will definitely widen the field of application of separation technologies in the near future.

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A successful meeting is not only due to the quality of the presented scientific papers, but also to the excellent work accomplished by the organising committee. My special thanks to Dechema e.V., in particular to Dr. V. Wiesmet and Dr. T. Track. Special thanks are due to Claudia Martz for organising all practical details of the meeting. The next International Symposium on Preparative Chromatography and Allied Techniques will take place in October 2006 in Innsbruck (Austria) under the Chairmanship of Professor Alois Jungbauer.

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