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Preface

The international conference on lead–acid batteries LABAT '99 was held in a fairly complicated situation. First, an annual INTELEC conference started in Copenhagen, Denmark at the same time. Stationary lead–acid batteries were one of the basic topics of this meeting. The same week, an international battery fair was held in Beijing, China. Three battery conventions within 1 week are rather too much. We regret sincerely the lack of co-ordination in the organization of international battery forums. Maybe, such conflicts could be avoided in the future if the international battery magazines and the *Journal of Power Sources* act as coordinators of these activities by extending their forthcoming conference calendars to cover a 3-year period.

The second factor with adverse effect on LABAT'99 was the war in Yugoslavia. Quite a number of delegates, who had registered to LABAT'99, cancelled their participation and their presentations at the conference as well.

Despite this complicated situation, LABAT'99 was attended by 172 delegates from 27 countries. A total of 43 papers were presented by prominent battery experts and 17 companies exhibited their products and services. These figures indicate that LABAT conferences have won solid positions in battery science, technology and marketing worldwide.

LABAT'99 will be remembered with some serious breaks through both in the technological and the purely scientific aspects of the lead–acid battery. The lectures were organised under the traditional topics for LABAT including: VRLAB; processes during battery manufacture and operation; new materials, machines and equipment for battery production; and battery testing.

It has become a tradition for the LABAT conferences to pay tribute to distinguished battery scientists all over the world for their outstanding contribution to the develop-

ment of lead–acid batteries by awarding them with the Gaston Planté Medal. The 1999 recipients of this prestigious international award were announced at a special ceremony during the conference.

If, judging by the general opinion of all LABAT'99 delegates, the conference can be evaluated as a successful one, then this success is greatly due to the hard efforts and enthusiasm of all members of the local Organizing Committee: Dr. Geno Papazov, Mrs. Mariana Gerganska, Dr. Temelaki Rogatchev, Dr. B. Monahov, Dr. Stefan Ruevski, Dr. Sasho Vasilev, Dr. Veselin Naidenov, Dr. Galia Petkova, Mrs. Maria Matrakova, Dr. Anton Momchilov and Dr. Branko Banov.

The good organization of the conference would not have been possible without the valuable assistance of all members of the International Advisory Committee and the Planté Medal Committee. I want to extend our special thanks to the chairmen of the conference sessions for having made the work of this conference so efficient as well as to all who presented papers and contributed to the discussions, which determined the high professional level of the conference.

This volume of the *Journal of Power Sources* devoted to the LABAT'99 conference contains a selection of papers presented at the conference, which we hope would be interesting and useful to the readers of this Journal.

The next LABAT conference will be held during the first full week of June in 2002 in Varna, one of the most picturesque resorts on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.

Prof. D. Pavlov
Chairman of LABAT'99