

## *Preface*

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The Laboratory 'Science et Méthodes Séparatives' (EA3233, of the University of Rouen) hosted in 2006 the 32<sup>nd</sup> Workshop on heterogeneous equilibria between phases 'Journées d'Etudes des Equilibres entre Phases'.

This annual international meeting provides the opportunity to demonstrate the importance of phase diagrams, when preparative and/or separative processes have to be understood, designed and optimized. The universal nature of this approach is illustrated by the diversity of the attendees: metallurgists, inorganic chemists, organic development chemists, pharmacists, etc. (the organizers expected and achieved a cross pollination of ideas).

Whereas numerous scientific domains fall apart into sub-specialities, this meeting preserves an overview of physico-chemistry which fits well with open-minded researchers showing scientific curiosity. This approach is not simply an intellectual exercise in thermodynamics but it integrates the design of separation processes when productivity, purity and cost are at stake.

In view to enlarge the population of scientists who can encompass this large domain of science, the organizing committee has encouraged the participation of young attendees. The quality of the presentations has been the best advocate in favour of the so-called 'phase diagram' approach. A selection of papers has been reviewed under the normal peer review procedure of the journal and is presented here.

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