

The 19th Polymer Networks Group Meeting (PNG2008) was held in Larnaca, Cyprus, from the 22nd to the 26th of June 2008. The conference hosted more than 250 participants from 34 countries and four continents. Two hundred papers were presented, about half of them as lectures (97) and the rest as posters (103). The meeting was organized by the University of Cyprus. The local organizing committee was chaired by C. S. Patrickios, and had members E. Leontidis, C. C. Doumanidis, and T. Krasia-Christoforou, all from the University of Cyprus, and E. Ioannou-Kakouri from the Cyprus State General Laboratory. The meeting was kindly sponsored by various international and local organizations. Particular mention is made to the European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences (EuCheMS), the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation, and Medochemie Ltd. (Limassol, Cyprus).

The Polymer Networks Group (PNG) is an independent international organization established in 1975 mainly by European scientists, aiming to promote research on the preparation, characterization and development of applications for polymer networks, both synthetic and natural (biological). PNG organizes meetings (usually) biannually, with the first two having taken place in Strasbourg (France) in 1975 and in London (UK) in 1977, and the last three having been held in Autrans (in France, near Grenoble) in 2002, in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland, USA in 2004, and at the University of Sheffield in the UK in 2006.

In addition to bringing together the active PNG members, PNG2008 also aimed at inviting new scientists: chemists, physicists,

material scientists and biologists, and engineers as well, working on different aspects of research on polymer networks and gels to share their results. That is why the scope of the meeting was kept broad, with sessions on synthesis, properties, applications, theory and modeling of networks, but also on nanohybrids and biological systems. Despite the breadth of scope, this meeting placed emphasis on the preparation of well-defined polymer networks using controlled/living polymerization techniques, as evidenced from the talks by half of the invited speakers. Although many living polymerization techniques are now available, the scientific community is reluctant in applying them for the preparation of networks, for which free radical polymerization is still preferred. This emphasis aimed at encouraging more scientists in using controlled polymerizations for network synthesis.

My own personal recollection of PNG meetings takes me back to the first of those meetings I attended. This was the Kraków (Poland) meeting in 2000. Then, we sadly farewelled Toyo Tanaka (MIT, USA) and Manfred Gordon (University of Essex, UK) who had passed away a few months before that meeting. The present meeting was marked by the loss of Michal Ilavský of Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic) who passed away at the end of February 2008. Micha was a very active PNG member from the establishment of the PNG. He was also a member of the International Advisory Board of this meeting and provided good suggestions on various occasions. We wish to dedicate the PNG2008 meeting and this volume to his memory.

*Costas S. Patrickios*



PNG Committee (from left to right): Henryk Galina (Rzeszow University of Technology, Poland), Mitsuhiro Shibayama (The University of Tokyo, Japan), John L. Stanford (University of Manchester, UK), Eric J. Amis (National Institute of Standards and Technology, USA), Bjorn T. Stokke (The Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway), Vassilios Galiatsatos (Equistar Chemicals, USA), Costas S. Patrickios (University of Cyprus, Cyprus), Erik Geissler (University of Grenoble, France) and Ferenc Horkay (National Institutes of Health, USA).