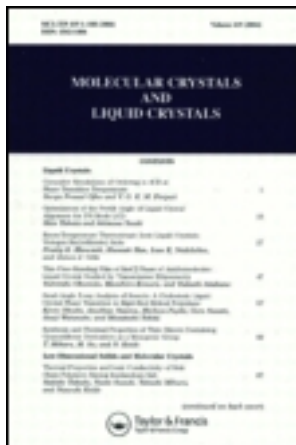


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Guest Editor's Preface

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GUEST EDITOR'S PREFACE

This volume contains material presented at the Seventh International Topical Meeting on Optics of Liquid Crystals (OLC'97). The conference was held in Heppenheim an der Bergstraße, Germany, September 8–12, 1997.

109 scientists from 21 different countries came to Heppenheim to present their scientific work and to discuss all modern aspects of Optics of Liquid Crystals and innovative fields of applications. The topics of the meeting were reflected in different sections on: General Linear Optics – Non Linear Optics – Electrooptics and Photonic Devices – LC Waveguides – Dye Doped Liquid Crystals and Photochemistry – Composite Materials, Confined Systems and Holographic Applications – Surfaces and Interfaces – Instabilities and Pattern Formation.

The Organizing Committee received more than 170 abstracts. Finally, 20 invited talks, 39 contributed talks, and 61 posters were presented at the OLC'97, demonstrating the increasing scientific importance and attractiveness of this series of conferences. Over 70 selected papers are presented in full in this special issue of *Molecular Crystal and Liquid Crystals*.

Besides its high scientific level, the OLC-meetings are famous for their informal atmosphere with plenty of discussions, exchanging of ideas, and maintaining and beginning of new collaborations. Here I wish to thank all participants and authors being responsible for the scientific success of the OLC'97 and the continuation of this tradition. The Advisory Board has decided to continue the OLC-meetings as a biannual international conference, that has successfully been established as the most important conference on Optics of Liquid Crystals. The next OLC meeting will be held 1999 in Humacao, Puerto Rico, organized by Prof. Fouad Aliev from the University of Puerto Rico.

However, such a conference could not be held without the generous financial support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Gordon and Breach Science Publishers and many sponsors from industry that is greatly appreciated.

Finally I would like to thank the conference secretary, Mrs. Ellen Happel, and all members of the Liquid Crystal Group at the Institute of Applied Physics, Darmstadt University of Technology, for their precious work helping me to organize the OLC'97.

Markus Kreuzer
Chairman of OLC'97
Darmstadt University of Technology