



## Molecular Crystals and Liquid Crystals

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### Guest Editors' Preface

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In every way, the 4 days in September 2004 were extraordinary. From September 12 to September 15, the *4th International Symposium on Photochromism* (ISOP'04) took place in Arcachon, gathering the most important contributors to the development of photochromic technologies. This Fourth Symposium, which was dedicated to the latest highlights and future innovations, has focussed on *photoswitchable molecular systems and devices*. Photochromism has matured from an isolated phenomenon to a science and a technology, and activity in both basic research and applications has spread world-wide. Today, photochromism is one of the most active branches in photochemistry and photophysics, and is involved in a large number of fields including nanotechnology, materials science and biotechnology. Fundamental and applied research on photochromics has experienced an ever-increasing activity with the finding of novel molecular architectures exhibiting various optical properties. As photochromism is accompanied by the change of several physical and chemical properties, this light-driven process – generally very fast – provides a convenient way to switch or trigger changes of measurable physical quantities or to induce changes of conformation or reactivity of molecular assemblies. In consequences, new potential applications have arisen in different domains ranging from optical data processing and storage to optical computing, magnetism, astrophysics, chemical analysis, medicine and biology.

180 researchers from more than 20 countries gathered *at the gateway to the majestic Aquitaine in Arcachon*, for this lively and most congenial discourse. The scientific program consisted of 4 plenary, 9 invited lectures, 27 oral communications and 110 posters fruitfully presented over the 4 days and included a panel of discussion on “The Future Vision for Photochromics and Related Technologies”. The essence of these presentations is captured in this proceedings volume.

We are all looking forward to the upcoming ISOP Symposium that will take place in 2007 in Vancouver, Canada and on behalf of

the organizing committee 2004 we wish Professor Neil Branda a successful organization of ISOP'07.

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