



Molecular Crystals and Liquid Crystals

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Guest Editor's Foreword

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Guest Editor's Foreword

The 8th International Conference on Frontiers of Polymers and Advanced Materials (8th ICFPAM) was held at Cancun, Quitana Roo, Mexico, on April 22–27, 2005. The very nice Mexican Caribbean atmosphere, near the beautiful cobalt blue of the Cancun Sea and the Mexican hospitality helped a lot to have it successful. This special issue contains a choice of selected papers presented during this event. The conference in Cancun was a sequel to the very successful series of international meetings held in Bucharest (Romania, 2003), Recife (Brazil, 2001), Poznan (Poland, 1999), Cairo (Egypt, 1997), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia, 1995), Jakarta (Indonesia, 1993) and New Delhi (India, 1991). The conferences focused on the most recent and important progress in the field of advanced materials, their science and technology and in new business opportunities resulting from the recent technological developments. Similarly to the preceding meetings the conference held in Cancun benefited of a wide international attendance, gathering around 200 participants coming from 26 countries. In the alphabetical order the following countries were represented: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Lithuania, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Russia, United Kingdom, Ukraine, Thailand, United States of America, and Venezuela.

The main conference objectives were:

- To highlight advances and new findings in polymers and advanced materials and their impact on new technologies;
- To facilitate technology transfer and new business opportunities by bringing together representatives from academia, research centers, industries and business;
- To foster international collaborations and joint ventures;
- To promote the growth of scientific and technical infrastructure in the field of polymers and advanced materials technologies.

The topics of the conferences were discussed in the following parallel sessions:

1. Chemistry and physics light-responsive materials and polymers: synthesis, characterization and applications in new technologies
 - 1a) Recent trends in azo polymers

2. Functional polymers including electroactive polymers, gel, intelligent materials, membranes, nanomaterials
 - 2a) Polymer membranes for separation
3. Natural Polymers and biomaterials including applications
4. New developments on common polymers: synthesis, characterization and applications
5. Simulation and theoretical aspects of functional materials

In addition to the papers presented during the oral sessions (total of 129 papers, invited and contributed papers) and posters presented during two poster sessions (total of 90 papers), a number of 18 keynote lectures and invited plenary lectures on interdisciplinary topics were given by distinguished scientists coming from academia, public research laboratories and from industry.

This book is a collection of selected and refereed papers presented at the conference. The typical presentation is multidisciplinary, containing a blend of chemistry, physics, materials processing and technology applications. The result is a comprehensive overview of polymer-related topics including innovative synthetic techniques, nanostructured materials for photonics and optics, multifunctional polymers, new composite, exotic, hybrid materials, sol-gels, device applications and environmental friendly materials and technologies. Both review and research papers are included. The review papers should assist in the cross-fertilization of different areas and training of young researchers, while the research papers will serve as useful reference materials summarizing the current status of individual topics and projecting future developments and future trends.

We wish to thank various institutions, agencies and corporations which provided substantial support for the conference: National University of Mexico (UNAM), Materials Research Institute and Institute of Nuclear Sciences, Mexico, United States Air Force Office for Scientific Research, Washington, Office of Naval Research Global, USA, Asian Office of Aerospace Research and Development, Tokyo, Japan, CIBAVISION, Atlanta, USA, SAMSUNG Advanced Institute of Technology, Korea, DOOSAN Corporation Korea, TOYOTA Motor Corporation, Nagoya, Japan, Taylor and Francis Group, USA.

We would like to thank the conference Honorary Chair Prof. Paras N. Prasad from University of Buffalo, USA, who started these series of conferences and organized previous very successful meetings, co-chairs: Prof. A. J. Ikushima, Toyota Technological Institute, Japan, Prof. R. Kozlowski, Institute of Natural Fibers, Poznan, Poland, Prof. K.-S. Lee, Hannam University, Taejon, Korea and Prof. J. E. Mark, University of Cincinnati, USA, International Coordinator:

Dr. J. Grote, Senior Electronics Engineer, Air Force Research Laboratory, Materials and Manufacturing Technology Directorate, Dayton, USA, International Secretary: Dr. F. Charra, CEA-DSM, CEA Saclay, and the members of the International Program Committee, chaired by Prof. R. Rowell, USDA Forest Service, USA and the International Advisory Committee, chaired by Prof. A. Meghea, University POLITEHNICA of Bucharest, Romania, for all helpful suggestions, selection of keynote and invited speakers as well as oral and poster contributions. The next conference will take place in 2007 in Cracow, Poland.

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