

## Preface

This special issue of *The European Physical Journal D* contains papers which have been presented at the 11th International Symposium on Small Particles and Inorganic Clusters. *ISSPIC 11* was held from September 9th to 13th, 2002, in Strasbourg, France. This city has been chosen because of its long European history, beauty, and because it lies practically on the border between France and Germany. The symposium organizers came from these two countries, and this international organization team proved to be quite an asset. Many people contributed to the success of the conference, which also would have been impossible to organize without the help of two funding agencies, the French CNRS and the German DFG.

More than 400 participants from many different countries around the world attended. We were fortunate enough to be able to use the sumptuous premises of the Council of Europe with its perfect conference facilities. A large fraction of the scientific contributions to the symposium is collected in this book. Each had to be an original scientific paper and was refereed by at least two referees. The strict rules of the *European Journal of Physics* regarding original publications applied.

The opening session of *ISSPIC 11* was dedicated to the memory of Walter Ekardt, a pioneer in cluster field. The work of Walter and his research group at Fritz Haber Institute at Berlin, on theoretical seminal contribution to the electronic and optical properties of metallic clusters opened new avenues in cluster science.

The central subject of this series of conferences is the science of finite size effects, which occur on the length scale of a few atomic diameters. It includes both the conceptual approach of finite systems and the elaboration of devices by controlling the material at nanometer scale. The field is very interdisciplinary today, having branched out from its physics roots into astronomy, chemistry, biology, and medicine. The length scale stated is much smaller than structures employed in nanotechnology today. This implies that the cluster science of today lays the ground work for an improved nanotechnology of tomorrow, showing how intimately basic science and future technology are linked.

*The Co-Chairs of ISSPIC 11*  
Catherine Bréchnagnac, Orsay, France  
Maurice Gross, Strasbourg, France  
Hellmut Haberland, Freiburg, Germany  
Ludger Wöste, Berlin, Germany

*Guest Editors*  
Catherine Bréchnagnac and Philippe Cahuzac, Orsay, France