

Foreword

The Fourth International Congress on Amino Acids was held at Vienna/Austria, August 7th–11th, 1995, under the chairmanship of Prof. Dr. G. Lubec, University of Vienna.

α -Amino acids represent a major class of natural products. They play a crucial role as low molecular bioregulators, they are constituents of peptides, proteins and peptidoglycans, they have also a function for neuronal signal transduction. Furthermore, many of their metabolites exhibit biological activity (e.g. polyamines). Most of the amino acids with unusual structures found in nature are produced by microorganisms. Since many of these unusual amino acids interfere with biochemical pathways of other organisms, there is a growing demand of man-designed, non-natural amino acids in virtually all disciplines of biochemistry, biology, chemistry, medicine and pharmacy for the rational design of drugs and agrochemicals. The development of new synthetic methodology for amino acids is of current interdisciplinary interest. Consequently, a large number of researchers from industry and academia met again at Vienna to exchange their latest results.

The speakers of the synthetic session have been invited to write reviews on the topics presented at the meeting to give an overview about some modern trends in amino acid synthesis to a broader public.

The Fifth International Congress on Amino Acids will be held at Chalkidiki, Greece, August 25th–29th, 1997. For information please contact: Prof. Dr. M. Liakopoulou-Kyriakides, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Department of Chemical Engineering, 540 06 Thessaloniki, Greece, (Fax +30-31-99-6193).

Leipzig, October 1996

K. Burger