

## Preface

The remediation of sites contaminated by hazardous substances is a major environmental concern in Europe and throughout the world. Bioremediation is a developing technology that uses micro-organisms to degrade contaminants into less toxic or non-toxic compounds. As the more traditional remediation technologies are proving to be expensive and in certain instances slow, bioremediation has become a popular and attractive alternative. Current research focuses on increasing the reproducibility and reliability of bioremediation technologies as well as on developing innovative new approaches. Each contaminated site is different and designing a successful remediation strategy is still a challenge. Quite often predicting the outcome of a particular bioremediation approach may be difficult to achieve reliably. Therefore, it is important to gather experiences from previous field attempts and to develop potent science-based methods for site characterization and technology selection to improve the success stories of bioremediation applications in the field.

In this special issue of *Biodegradation*, a selected papers presented at the Second European Bioremediation Conference (held in Chania, Greece, June 30 to July 3, 2003) are published. The conference brought together scientists, engineers and other environmental professionals from all

over Europe and the rest of the world that presented their findings and discussed future trends and directions for the restoration of contaminated sites using environmental biotechnology-based technologies. Bioremediation in the context of the conference included agro-industrial wastewater and phytoremediation technologies. The subject material of this issue covers field applications of bioremediation technology as well as basic research in environmental biotechnology.

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Finally, we would like to thank all the reviewers (at least two for each paper) that helped in making this special journal issue on bioremediation excellent reference material.

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