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Introduction by the Guest Editors

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Hydrocarbon oxidation continues to attract considerable research attention worldwide. Oxidation is viewed as a viable means of activation of readily available hydrocarbons since there exists great potential for the production of higher added value intermediates. Against this background the European Community funded two Human Capital Mobility projects on the topic of hydrocarbon oxidation. At a meeting on oxidation catalysis hosted by Professor Manfred Baerns in Berlin in November 1995, the Guest Editors of this issue of *Catalysis Today* decided that it would be appropriate to bring together in a single volume papers from the collaborating laboratories that were representative of the science carried out as well as showing the cross-linked synergistic relationship that exists between the network teams. This volume represents the fruition of these efforts.

Thirteen papers are presented involving 15 laboratories and nine European countries: Berlin-Ge, Bochum-Ge, Bologna-It, Compiègne-Fr, Cork-Ir, Eindhoven-Nl, Limerick-Ir, Lisboa-Port, Liverpool-UK, Madrid-Sp, Milano-It, Poitiers-Fr, Trondheim-No, Valencia-Sp, Villeurbanne-Fr. The work carried out in the two projects can be divided into three themes: (a) the conversion of methane to synthesis gas, (b) oxidative dehydrogenation and (c) partial oxidation resulting in oxygen insertion. Examples of the science carried out in these three themes, from fundamentals to reaction engineering, are given in this volume and we hope you enjoy them.

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