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Editorial

Catalysis plays an increasingly important role with respect to environmental chemistry. For example, improved catalytic processes which give higher yields of the desired products represent cleaner synthesis since by-products, which are often expensive to dispose off, are decreased. In this sense, catalysis is inherently cleaner and environmentally friendly when compared with non-catalysed processes. However, in recent years, an emphasis has been placed on designing catalysts that can effectively react with harmful by-products or effluents to form less harmful materials. This, in essence, is environmental catalysis and this embraces the reduction of sulphur in oil feedstocks and VOC destruction. In the recent EUROPACAT-IV meeting in Rimini in September 1999, we co-chaired a session of papers that concentrated on the topic of environmental catalysis. This prompted us to try to collect a set of papers on this topic for publication in *Catalysis Today*. This volume represents the fruits of this effort. It must be noted that, certainly, not all European laboratories working in the field of environmental catalysis are represented, but this issue gives a flavour of the research efforts in this field in Europe. Most of the papers included in this volume were presented at the EUROPACAT-IV Symposium. The keynote address was given by Jacob Moulijn and this paper opens this issue on environmental catalysis. A number of papers deal with hydrodechlorination and oxidation of chlorinated VOCs. Others deal with NO_x reduction, CeO_2 as a high activity oxidation catalyst, sulphur abatement, oxides as superacids and plasmacatalytic processes. In all, there are 22 manuscripts in this collection, which we trust you will agree is a timely contribution to this field.

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