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Foreword

A group of 17 papers is given here, selected from the 76 communications presented at the *Symposium 5: Catalysis for Fine Chemicals Synthesis*, of the *EuropaCat-IV*, the fourth European Congress on Catalysis, held at Rimini on 5–10 September, 1999. As a general introduction of the topic, the selection includes the invited plenary lecture given by Hans-Ulrich Blaser and entitled *Heterogeneous Catalysis for Fine Chemicals Production*.

The main goal of the symposium was to provide an opportunity for academic and industrial scientists to meet and discuss recent developments in catalysis for the selective and clean synthesis of fine chemicals. Indeed one of the main characteristics of the manufacture of fine chemicals is the high value of the so-called *E* factor, with large amounts of unwanted by-products to be recycled or discarded. The contributions to this issue show, on a large diversity of reactions, the high potential of heterogeneous catalysis for the development of environment-friendly processes.

The papers have been divided into four classes, according to their subject, namely:

1. Enantioselective and diastereoselective hydrogenation,
2. Epoxidation reactions,
3. Acid and base catalyzed reactions: alkylation, nitration, aldolization, etc.,
4. "One pot" multistep transformations.

We are confident that the present selected papers may be of help to the reader, providing some relevant examples of the present trends in the fascinating field of Fine Chemicals Synthesis by Heterogeneous Catalysis.

Lucio Forni*, Michel Guisnet

Dipartimento di Chimica

Fisica ed Elettrochimica

Università di Milano, via C. Golgi 19

20133 Milan, Italy

E-mail address: l.forni@csrsrc.mi.cnr.it (L. Forni)

*Corresponding editor. Tel.: +39-2-266-03-289;

fax: +39-2-706-38-129.