

Editorial Foreword

Last year (July 3–5), the Fourth International Conference on Catalysis in Membrane Reactors (ICCMR-2000) took place in Zaragoza, Spain. After four consecutive meetings of the scientific community working on membrane reactors (with the fifth meeting scheduled to be held in Dalian, China, in 2002), the ICCMR tradition seems to be consolidated. This impression is reinforced when we consider the conference statistics: ICCMR-2000 gathered 132 participant scientists from 25 countries, an all-time high. This included a sizeable representation from industrial companies, an indication that the field of catalytic membranes may be nearing commercial realisation. The number of presentations also reached its highest figures, with five plenaries, 42 oral communications and 37 poster presentations. While many new developments were presented within well-established fields (dense metal membranes and mesoporous membranes, each accounting for about 20% of the abstracts submitted), newer fields such as zeolite membranes and dense electrolyte membranes were also well represented, each contributing about 17% of the abstracts. In addition, a special *Recent Reports* section was held, in which seven additional contributions were presented. The deadline for presentation of these recent reports was fixed at only 6 weeks before the start of ICCMR-2000, and this contributed to the enhancement of the “state of the art” feeling that pervaded the meeting.

This volume contains 26 papers corresponding to about one third of the presentations at ICCMR-2000. Special thanks are due to the members of the Scientific Committee who initially reviewed the abstracts presented, and also to the more than 50 reviewers (many from outside the Scientific Committee) who carried out a strict reviewing process on the manuscripts submitted. We also wish to thank the authors for the extra effort required to send their contributions and carry out revisions within the tight time frame allowed.

We sincerely hope that this volume will be a valuable addition to the specialist literature on membrane reactors. Hopefully, it will also provide new researchers in the area with a first-hand impression of this extremely dynamic field.

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