

Foreword

Coordination and organometallic chemistry research in Spain, as with many scientific disciplines, suffered in the past from a long period of scientific isolation and scarce economic resources. This situation started to change, albeit slowly, in the 1970s. At that time, several authors in this special issue had the opportunity to spend a postdoctoral period in leading international laboratories. Many of them, particularly those from Zaragoza University, specialised in organometallic chemistry due to the leadership of Professor Rafael Uson a firm believer in the importance of organometallic and coordination chemistry. When Professor Uson moved to the Inorganic Chemistry Chair of Zaragoza in 1967, modern molecular inorganic chemistry was still in its infancy but under his influence the situation has greatly changed. There is no doubt that his seminal activity has largely contributed to the vigorous state of organometallic chemistry in Spain. Furthermore, other major Spanish Universities, such as Sevilla, Barcelona, and Valencia, also followed this international track with remarkable vitality.

The principal advances of Spanish chemistry are coincident with the generational and democratic changes of the 1980s and the new opportunities offered in the context of the European Union, but, especially, due to the positive influence of an ambitious science programme for the support of scientific activities, including training and research instrumentation, designed by active scientists in the early 1980s. As a result of that, a new climate was built, offering wide opportunities for the expansion of current coordination and organometallic chemistry, as well as for the incorporation of other interesting areas, such as molecular magnetism, or theoretical studies of coordination compounds, very active, nowadays.

As a result of these efforts, Spanish chemistry has experienced a remarkable increase in size and competence, as illustrated by the spectacular increase in the Spanish share of the total world number of publications which increased from 1% in 1981 to 3.5% in 1995. In this context, in 1993, Spanish chemistry ranked as the ninth country in publication count (2.93%) and eighth in citation count (3.43%). Some estimates of the actual Spanish share of organometallic and coordination chemistry in the world suggest it to be higher than 4%. As we reach the end of this millennium it could be said that Spanish chemistry, and especially organometallic and coordination chemistry, has finally reached a rational level.

I hope that this Special Issue of Coordination Chemistry Reviews will illustrate the vitality and diversity of our scientific community. However, due to space limitations it has only been possible to invite a small number of contributors and,

in a few cases, some invited colleagues were unable to reach the initial deadline. It is expected that their contributions will appear in future issues of this review journal. All that remains from me is to warmly thank the authors, the referees and last, but not least, the Editor-in-Chief, Professor A.B.P. Lever, who made this Special Issue both possible and most rewarding.

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