Preface

The Rolduc Polymer Meeting was organized in 1997 for the 10th time. Over the years this discussion meeting, known for its intensive debates on up to date themes, has acquired both an intimate and an international character. Over 2000 participants have joined in these discussions on frontline research up to now, a large number of them being leading peers in their fields. The success of Rolduc Polymer Meeting is also based on extensive and active participation of industrial researchers and research managers. Due to their contributions we were able to achieve integration of Polymer Science and Polymer Technology as aimed at.

Polymer Industry is doing well these days and the focus of Polymer Industry and of Industrial Research will remain in core business the coming years. On the other hand discussion in society about sustainability, about reproducible natural resources and conservation of fossil resources may well influence the long-term future of polymer materials. The International Organizing Committee of the Rolduc Polymer Meeting therefore decided to organize this time a thorough discussion on the topic "Petro(chemical) based Polymers" versus "Green Polymers".

For thousands of years nature was the only source of polymeric materials and even at this moment quite a list of natural polymer products is still present on the market (e.g. wool, silk, cotton, cellulose, natural rubber, varnish etc.). We all know the extensive list of synthetic polymers, for the greater part based on fossil carbohydrates. The latest developments and the "green character" of both these types of polymer were discussed in two separate sessions.

Some polymers are produced both by industry and by nature (polyaminoacids, polyesters, casein) and the production of synthetic polymers from "green monomers" (CO_2, CH_4, ethylene etc.) was shown to be well within reach. Finally, combinations of products from both areas may lead to attractive new materials (composites and blends of synthetic and biopolymers, chemically modified green polymers, copolymers and so on). The synergy of "Petrobased" and "Green" polymers combinations was intensively discussed.

This volume covers most oral contributions presented at the meeting and some selected poster presentations. The organizing committee wishes the reader equal appreciation as the participants.

I thank all contributors to this volume.

Ludo Kleintjens, chairman