

POLYCHAR, the World Forum for Advanced Materials, focussed in 2007 on Polymer Science on the South American continent. POLYCHAR 15 had it home this year in Buzios, Brazil. It is quite natural that a majority of participants are always from the geographical neighbourhood. That is one reason why POLYCHAR travels around the world since the year 2004. All the time before its home was traditionally the University of North Texas, Denton, Texas. Although UNT was always an excellent host – as Texans use to be – and a good place to meet, the advantage of meeting each year on a different continent makes it easier for all to come to the meeting; at least once in a few years it is nearby. The philosophy that made this IUPAC-sponsored annual conference so successful over the years is to provide scientist – in particular young scientists, graduate students and newcomers in Polymer Science – with a forum where they can meet, present their results and discuss with experienced scientists from academia and industry. Originally focussed on the characterization of polymeric systems, the conference has widened its scope to advanced materials, still a domain of Polymer Science.

The meeting in Buzios has attracted about 180 participants from 21 countries, many of them from South America, proudly presenting the quality of their science, but also from far-away countries such as Lithuania, South Korea, India, Israel or South Africa. For some participants POLYCHAR offers the rare occasion to meet friends, exchange results and to start new cooperations. For students and young scientists it has turned out that POLYCHAR is a splendid stock market for cooperations, to find post-graduate

positions or create other contacts. The coffee breaks and the “inofficial sessions” in the evening are most effective events, and many good projects came into being on a paper napkin in a pub.

The Conference was perfectly organized by the Instituto de Macromoléculas Professora Eloísa Mano, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (IMA/UFRJ). The organizing committee was led by Prof. Elizabete Fernandes Lucas – IMA/UFRJ. This conference volume represents only a small fraction of the multitude of contributions from different parts of materials science – 57 oral contributions and 160 posters. Many of the contributions have review character, some represent excellent original contributions. Only a small number could be selected for this volume because of the limited space that is available. All this was possible with the sponsorship of IUPAC. A highlight of the conference finally was the Paul J. Flory Research Award (ex aequo) to Prof. Eloisa Mano, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Prof. Jean-Marc Saiter, Université de Rouen, Rouen, France, and the International Materials Research Award to Prof. Dusan Berek, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovakia, and numerous awards for young scientists and students, including the IUPAC Poster Award.

The next POLYCHAR will be hosted by Prof. R. P. Singh, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lucknow, Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), India, in 2008, and in many laboratories all over the world scientists are eagerly working on their next contributions.

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