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The Joint 12th Symposium on the Chemistry of Heterocyclic Compounds (SCHHC) and the 6th Blue Danube Symposium on Heterocyclic Chemistry (BDSHC)

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In this editorial of the special issue of the journal "Molecules" devoted to contributions to the joint 12th Symposium on the Chemistry of Heterocyclic Compounds (SCHHC) and the 6th Blue Danube Symposium on Heterocyclic Chemistry (BDSHC) which took place from September 1 to September 4, 1996 in Brno, Czech Republic, I would like to inform you briefly about the history and course of this event. The symposium was a follow-up to the previous heterocyclic symposia founded in Brno in 1963 and the 5th Blue Danube symposium in Papiernicka - Castá, Slovakia. The symposium was organized by The Department of Organic Chemistry, Masaryk University of Brno and Lachema, a.s. (Chemical Plant) Brno. Coorganizing institutions were The Czech Chemical Society, Brno Branch; The Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry, The Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague; the Departments of Organic Chemistry of Technical Universities, Bratislava, Budapest and Vienna; The Central Research Institute for Chemistry, Hungarian Academy of Sciences; and the Austrian, Hungarian and Slovak Chemical Societies.

This year's symposium proceeded under the auspices of the Rector of Masaryk University, Professor Eduard Schmidt and the Mayor of the City Center Dr. Jarmila Horová.

The history of SCHHC falls into the period when a divided Europe meant it was not easy to travel from one part

of Europe to another one and to share knowledge with other colleagues working in the same branch of chemistry. There was the "Iron Curtain" – for some people a barrier which was not easy to overcome. In those days, there arose the good idea to organize Heterocyclic meetings in Brno for scientists from the so called Eastern Block and to invite a number of speakers from the Western Block to that conference and, in this way, enable them to make contacts. The first three symposia were organized in Brno by The Department of Organic Chemistry, always with the cooperation of The Czechoslovak Chemical Society. Later on the initiative of organization was also taken over by other institutions in the former Czechoslovak Republic. In 1972, it was the Prague branch of The Czechoslovak Chemical Society which organized the 4th SCHHC in Ústí nad Labem. The essential merit for the history of the symposia must be shared with our colleagues in Slovakia. They organized symposia in 1975, 1981 and 1987 in Bratislava (Department of Organic Chemistry, Slovak Technical University) and in 1990 in Košice (Department of Organic Chemistry, University of P.J.Šafárik). Prague also hosted the conference twice. In 1984 the organizer was The Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry, The Academy of Sciences, Prague and the last but one symposium in 1993 was organized by The Department of Organic Chemistry, Institute of Chemical Technology, Prague.

The joint “Blue Danube” symposium is the younger of the two. It was founded by the combined initiative of Prof. Dr. Fritz Sauter from Vienna Technical University and colleagues from The Department of Organic Chemistry, Slovak Technical University of Bratislava with the aim of facilitating regular contacts between chemists working in heterocyclic chemistry in countries around the River Danube. Later colleagues from The Central Institute of Chemistry, Hungarian Academy of Sciences and Czech chemists supported their initiative of organizing such a symposium every year. After the first symposium in Vienna (1991), the second took place in Smolenice (1992, Slovakia), the third one was in Sopron (1993, Hungary). The 4th BDSHC returned again to Austria (1994, St. Pöten) and the most recent was in Papiernicka - Castá (1995, Slovakia).

This integrated symposium with more than 220 participants from 17 countries was probably the largest event in the history of these meetings. Asymmetric synthesis, chiral auxiliaries and various metal catalysts in the synthesis of heterocycles were the main domain of one part of the contributions at the conference. The other part of the contributions was devoted to new reactions and the search for their mechanism. The novelty of the symposium was the methodically oriented lectures on methods used in syn-

thetic heterocyclic chemistry as well as in structural investigation of the products and the progress made.

The conference was saddened by the absence of the invited speaker Professor Dr. Gerrit L'abbé from The Department of Chemistry, Catholic University Leuven. During the symposium we were informed of his unexpected death. Although we are convinced that his name and his achievements have already been written for ever into the pages of the history of heterocyclic chemistry we would like to dedicate this special issue of the journal to his memory.

The next (7th) BDSHC will be held in the spring of 1998 in Hungary (Eger). The location of the 13th SCHHC has not yet been fixed although it will probably be organized from Prague or Pardubice.

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