

Conference Call

German-South African minisymposium organized by Sanjay Mathur and Ron Sanderson and jointly funded by the National Research Foundation (South Africa) and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (Germany). All of the presentations at the symposium were given by research students.

In addition, the South African Department of Science and Technology generously sponsored poster awards for young chemists. First prize was given to Ziboneni Godongwana of the South African Institute for Advanced Materials at the University of the Western Cape for the poster entitled "Inexpensive production of graphitic mesoporous carbon material." Second prize was given to Rushanah Mohamed and Ziboneni Godongwana, from the same institute, for a poster entitled "Preparation and characterization of proton conducting membranes for direct methanol fuel cell applications."

The success of WAM III in terms of its educational objective may best be judged by the fact that many more students than established scientists attended. Moreover, the rapidly growing interest in materials chemistry in general, and nanoscience in particular, is reflected in the fact that the workshop was significantly larger than its predecessors. Notably, it was attended by delegates and students from the African countries of Algeria, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Libya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa.

Piet Steyn <psst@sun.ac.za>, a professor at the University of Stellenbosch, was a member of the local organizing committee and the IUPAC representative. John Corish <jcorish@tcd.ie> is the chairman of the IUPAC Interdivisional Subcommittee on Materials Chemistry and the WAM III International Organizing Committee.

Young European Chemists

by Leiv K. Sydnes

In August 2005, more than 120 European chemists between 20 and 35 years of age met in Brno in the Czech Republic to discuss chemistry research and compete for the European Medal and Prize. This was the fifth in a series of conferences run under the auspices of Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET) for Europe and its leader, Dr. Eric Wharton.

This meeting series—known as the "Younger European Chemists' Conference" series—is a concrete



Poster presentations and discussions constitute the backbone of the Younger European Chemists' conferences. IUPAC President Leiv K. Sydnes discusses photochemical problems with Elena Tulyakova from M V Lomonosov Moscow State University in Russia. (Photo: Frank Dumbleton)

result of a discussion on measures that could be taken to increase European students' and Ph.D. candidates' interest in science and technology in the face of the declining number of chemistry graduates in many European countries. This special annual meeting, which emphasizes interaction and cooperation between young scientists working in the field of chemistry, is designed to inspire more students to opt for a career in chemistry and chemistry research.

The conference series was created by a small group of enthusiasts headed by Eric Wharton from the United Kingdom. The first meeting was held in London in 2001, and subsequent meetings in Heidelberg, Grenoble, and Torino. Sponsors have been European chemical companies as well as the Royal Society of Chemistry.

The conference serves as an international forum for the presentation of posters, short talks, and discussion of recent advances in chemistry research and development and is geared to the needs of younger European chemical researchers. A key goal is to foster networking and cooperation across Europe; with that in mind, extensive discussions are held at the meetings based on the posters presented by the young participants. These discussions are led by an international group of scientists that scrutinize every poster and quiz each presenter extensively. During this process, the participants are assessed and the winner of the medal and prize for "Excellence in Science, Engineering and Technology in Europe" is selected. The format is unique and means that the meetings

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receive a level of attention rarely seen at other conferences.

This year, as in earlier years, participants came from all parts of Europe. More than 25 countries were represented, from the Arctic to the Mediterranean and from the Atlantic Ocean to east of the Ural Mountains. And when the meeting was coming to an end after four hectic days, the international poster judges revealed that Dr. Javier Garcia-Martinez, a postdoctoral fellow from the Universidad de Alicante in Spain, was the winner of this year's European Medal and Prize.

In addition to the extensive, productive poster sessions, lectures were given by selected keynote speakers. This year IUPAC sponsored one of the lectures—the 2005 IUPAC Lecture—which was delivered by Professor Gerald Pattenden from Nottingham University in the United Kingdom. Pattenden talked about “The Excitement of Natural Products and Their Biomimetic Synthesis” with such vigor and enthusiasm that he appeared to be living proof of the title. Many participants indeed felt inspired to carry on with chemistry after his talk.

Another enthusiastic keynote lecturer was Pietro Tundo from Università Ca Foscari di Venezia in Italy. Professor Tundo is a driving force in the field of green

chemistry, not only in Europe, but also within IUPAC, where he has chaired the Subcommittee on Green Chemistry for a number of years. His lecture on “Green Chemistry: Research and Education” presented much interesting chemistry and also outlined how a sustainable (green) perspective could become an integral part of a modern chemistry curriculum. And he did not forget IUPAC: both the Union and the First International IUPAC Conference on Green Chemistry, to be held 10–15 September 2006 in Dresden, Germany, were well promoted.

In addition, as president of IUPAC, I delivered a presentation entitled “IUPAC: Advancing Worldwide Chemistry and Chemistry Worldwide.” For an audience that mainly associates IUPAC with rules for naming organic compounds, the talk contained a great deal of new material that generated both questions and discussion. Notably, several participants subsequently volunteered to become involved in IUPAC activities.

The 2006 Younger European Chemists' Conference will be held in Budapest on 22–27 August 2006.

Leiv K. Sydnes <leiv.sydnes@kj.uib.no> was IUPAC president in the 2004–2005 biennium; he is a member of the Norwegian Chemical Society and professor at the University of Bergen.

 www.setforeurope.org



The IUPAC Lecture was delivered by Gerald Pattenden from Nottingham University in the United Kingdom. (Photo: Frank Dumbleton)



Javier Garcia-Martinez, a postdoctoral fellow from Universidad de Alicante in Spain, was the winner of this year's European Medal and Prize. He received the medal and the certificate from Stephen Abbott, research director for Autotype International and visiting professor at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom. (Photo: Frank Dumbleton)

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Scientific programme committee:

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*EuCheMS, the European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences incorporates 50 member societies which in total represent some 150,000 individual chemists in academia, industry and government in over 35 countries across Europe