

FOREWORD

The first meeting of the chemists of Croatia, Italy and Slovenia was organized by the University of Trieste (Italy) from July 1 to July 2, 1998. It was decided in Trieste that the next symposium of this series of biannual meetings should take place on the isles of Brijuni (Croatia). Concomitantly, the second ACIS-CHEM symposium was held on Veliki Brijun at the »Neptun« hotel on September 3-6, 2000. Two additional Central European countries – Austria and the Czech Republic – joined this undertaking. The idea behind the series of symposia is the formation of a firm basis for scientific collaboration between countries which share the same history, and have similar cultural heritage and traditions. On top of that, these Central European countries are geographically close, which should enable an easier exchange of researchers, a better flow and fertilization of ideas, a more efficient use of large experimental facilities, and sharing of technical knowledge. This is of paramount importance, because modern research is becoming more and more interdisciplinary and thus necessarily polycentric. There is no single university center or research institute, which possesses both competence and excellence in all disciplines of (chemical) science. Cooperation and networking is therefore a *conditio sine qua non* for competitiveness on the world scale. Many of these goals were achieved at the 2nd ACIS-CHEM 2000 symposium on Brijuni and this special issue of *Croatica Chemica Acta* reflects some of its scientific highlights.

The steering committee decided on Brijuni that Hungary, Slovakia and Poland should be invited to join this collaboration and that we should focus more on the chemical research related to biology. Consequently, ACIS-CHEM symposia will grow into Central European Conferences on »Chemistry Towards Biology« and the first one will be organized by V. Kaučič in Portorož (Slovenia) on September 8-12, 2002. The friendly and stimulating atmosphere, as well as the consensus regarding the needs of intensive collaboration in the region, attained on Brijuni are both a heritage of the 2nd ACIS-CHEM symposium and a guarantee of the future success of the Central European Conferences on chemistry.

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