

The 4th European Polymer Congress (www.epf2007.org) was held this year in Portoroz, a seaside town located on Slovenia's Adriatic coast. European Polymer Congresses are biannual meetings and are one of the major activities of the European Polymer Federation (EPF), which is an independent association of 29 academic and industrial national organizations from 27 European countries, dealing with polymers (www.europolymer.org). The EPF congresses developed from the EPF conferences that started in 1986, when the EPF was established. EPF congresses are hosted by the particular European country who chairs the EPF during that period and previous congresses have been held in Eindhoven, Netherlands (2001), Stockholm, Sweden (2003), and Moscow, Russia (2005). The next EPF congress will take place in Austria, Graz, in 2009.

The EPF congresses aim to promote polymer research and to bring together polymer scientists, researchers, students, and other relevant participants. They are one of the year's greatest events in polymer science and overview both state of the art as well as new initiatives in already established and emerging fields of polymer science and technology. EPF congresses are known world-wide, attracting over 600 participants. This year, there were 824 participants and 49 countries were represented. The majority of participants (85%) were from Europe: from Slovenia and Germany 10.3%, from France and Italy around 9%, Russia 8.3%, Spain and Poland 3.9%, Romania 3.4%, the Netherlands 3.2%, while attendance from each of the non-European countries was below 3%.

The scientific programme of the EPF-2007 consisted of 15 plenary lectures and over 800 contributions presented in eight parallel sessions plus a special session in memory of the late Prof. Viktor Kabanov; there were also 90 invited lectures, 234 oral contributions and more than 500 poster presentations. The opening lecture on the first day of the congress was given by the Nobel Prize laureate Professor Jean-Marie Lehn, France, and was entitled "Dynamers: Dynamic molecular and supramolecular polymers". We listened to the leading-edge plenary speakers Markus Antonietti, Germany, "New techniques of heterophase polymerization, hybrids, block copolymers, and the world of carbon", Dirk J. Broer, The Nether-

lands, "Polymers in motion: From paintable displays to artificial muscles", Taihyun Chang, Korea, "Chromatography characterization of polymers beyond size exclusion chromatography", José M. Kenny, Italy, "Functionalization of carbon nanotubes for polymer matrix nanocomposites with multifunctional properties", Alexei R. Khokhlov, Russia, "Towards new functional synthetic copolymers via rational design of their sequences", Kurt Kremer, Germany, "Multiscale modeling of soft matter: Where chemical details and generic properties meet", Krzysztof Matyjaszewski, USA, "New ATRP processes with ppm amounts of Cu for nanostructured functional materials", Christopher K. Ober, USA, "Building and patterning the biology-materials interface" Rudolf Podgornik, Slovenia, "The nature and characterization of order in high density DNA mesophases", Sanjay Rastogi, The Netherlands, "Melting kinetics in polymers; a route to a new melt state", Mitsuo Sawamoto, Japan, "Transition metal-catalyzed living radical polymerization: Recent progress and beyond" Stanislaw Slomkowski, Poland, "Very small polymer particles and medicine", Brigitte Voit, Germany, "Hydrophilic, amphiphilic and thermo-responsive polymers and gels synthesized for biomedical applications", and Manfred H. Wagner, Germany, "Challenges in elongational rheology of polymer melts".

The scientific programme of the conference covered the chemistry and physics of polymers, modeling and simulation, and the processing of polymers and polymeric materials, which were covered in the eight sessions. Complex polymer systems and nanoscience and Polymer synthesis and modification garnered the most interest with 22 and 20 % of all the contributions, respectively. The sessions Structures and architecture of synthetic and biopolymers and Polymers for advanced applications covered 13% of the contributions, Polymers in medicine and the environment 10%, Theory, modeling and simulation 8%, and Polymer rheology and processing and Advances in polymer characterization 7% of all presented contributions. In addition to the scientific programme, a round table on polymer education was organized providing some observations on the advantages and drawbacks of implementing the Bologna process in different European countries.



The current and key questions in polymer rheology and processing were addressed through 9 invited, 21 oral and 31 poster contributions in the session, organized by Ken Walters and Piet J. Lemstra, and co-chaired by several national experts in rheology. The invited speakers from Belgium (Christian Bailly), France (Nadia El Kissi, Vincent Verney), Portugal (Antonio A. M. Cunha), Slovenia (Igor Emri), the Netherlands (Han J. G. P. Goossens) and USA (Donald G. Baird, Julia A. Kornfield, David J. Lohse) covered different aspects of this research field, i.e. relating rheology and miscibility to chemical architecture, multiscale phenomena in polymer structure formation, structure and morphology development in injection molding, flow-induced crystallization, nanoparticles in polymer melts, predictions of rheology by tube models, rheology and flow simulations of polymer melts containing glass fibers, life cycle analysis via rheology, polymer fuel cell membranes.

Apart from scientific work, the participants enjoyed a more relaxed atmosphere in the evenings at the welcome reception, gala dinner, and the farewell party, which featured the popular Slovenian band Terrafolk, while twelve young researchers were awarded for the best poster presentations. Participants were also encouraged to discover the beauties of Piran, one

of the oldest cities of Slovenia, and the Slovenian landscape with tours organized to different sights in Slovenia like Postojna and Skocjan caves in the Karst region as well as to Bled with its emerald-green lake, a church on the island in the middle of the lake, and a medieval castle. And last but not least, the fine summer weather made swimming in the Adriatic sea a must.

The conference has been, according to the opinion expressed by many participants, a great success. The conference was organized by the Section for Polymers of the Slovenian Chemical Society, the European Polymer Federation, the National Institute of Chemistry, the University of Ljubljana and University of Maribor. Special thanks go to the industrial sponsors (Smile Group, Julon, Helios, and Sava), as well as to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of RS, Slovenian Research Agency, Elsevier and the National Institute of Chemistry for helping to underwrite the EPF-2007.

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