

Preface

It is a great pleasure to introduce this special issue of *Sensors and Actuators* based on the contributions presented in Eurosensors XVII. The aim of the Eurosensors conferences is to promote research in Europe in the field of solid-state transducers and, more specifically, in microtechnologies, nanotechnologies, microsensors and microactuators. The 17th conference was held in Guimaraes, Portugal, from 21 to 24 September 2003, at the University of Minho campus.

The conference programme was prepared by an International Technical Programme Committee of experts. The organization was supported by the University of Minho and by numerous sponsors, from companies to institutes that took an active part in the success of the conference, with an excellent exhibition area of 20 booths.

The call for papers yielded 459 high-quality papers, despite the existence of numerous seminars and conferences on related topics in Europe in 2003. The technical Programme Committee decided to accept 341 of contributed papers: 123 as oral and 218 as poster contribution. We believe that the result was a nicely balanced programme with *excellent contributions as many as 41 countries are represented with papers*. The technical programme continued with three oral parallel sessions and poster presentations. As in Prague 2002, we decided to make the poster sessions plenary, not overlapping with oral sessions. In addition to all these papers, the programme was structured by five invited lectures given by renowned pioneers and experts. This year the invited lectures

covered nanotechnology, biomedical microdevices (e.g. the DNA microchip) and electronic noses.

The authors of the selected papers for Eurosensors XVII were invited to submit an extended version of the paper to Elsevier in order to be evaluated for publication in *Sensors and Actuators*. Readers will be impressed by the importance and diversity of the information provided in this special issue of *Sensors and Actuators*.

On behalf of the organization of Eurosensors XVII, we would like to thank Elsevier and the Editor-in-Chief of *Sensors and Actuators A: Physical*, Prof. P.J. French, the Editor-in-Chief of *Sensors and Actuators B: Chemical*, Prof. M. Koudelka-Hep and their staff, for the opportunity to publish this special issue of *Sensors and Actuators* based on Eurosensors XVII technical programme.

Finally, may we remind all readers that Eurosensors XVIII will be held in Rome, Italy, on 13–15 September 2004. See you in Rome in September 2004!

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