

Preface

The 7th congress on Catalysis and Automotive Pollution Control (CAPoC7) was held in Brussels from August 30th to September 1st 2006. As its predecessors, the conference enjoyed large interest and attracted nearly 300 participants from 27 countries. In five half-day sessions the recent technological developments and achievements in air pollution control from mobile sources were presented. As usual for a CAPoC conference, large room was granted for discussion of papers. Many of the posters were subject to short oral pleading as well.

CAPoC7 was held exactly 20 years after the first congress in this series. A. Frennet and A. Crucq, organizers of CAPoC1 in 1986, considered it a “risky undertaking” to arrange a symposium on this “very restricted scientific field”. It soon turned out that they had a good nose though. Automotive pollution control by catalysis rapidly developed to become one of the most active areas of applied research in heterogeneous catalysis. Despite living in a world of fast technological moves it seems at present that catalysis will remain the method of choice for abating vehicle emissions in the future. From a more general point of view, the invention of the catalytic converter has largely contributed to boost the public awareness for catalysis as a proper means to protect the environment. The enormous progress made over the years to design continuously more efficient catalysts is a perfect demonstration of the “push-and-pull principle”. Ever tighter legislation on emission standards has forced catalyst makers to improve catalytic formulations. This in turn had profound impact on the composition of petrol. Lead additives were phased-out and replaced by other harmless compounds capable of increasing the necessary octane number. Improved gasoline formulations have brought significant benefits in reducing both toxic air

pollution and ozone pollution, or smog. The benefits seem to have been equivalent to removing many million vehicles from the road. With all these efforts one should not forget the dramatic progress in vehicle technology necessary to reduce the fuel consumption.

The CAPoC7 proceedings presented in this special issue of the “Topics in Catalysis” make no difference between oral and poster contributions. On the whole, 88 papers have been accepted and assigned to the different topics as defined by the scope of the conference.

The Editors are indebted to the members of the organizing committee and the advisory board. Their expertise was of invaluable help in providing the right format to the conference, in selecting the submitted papers and reviewing these with scientific rigour.

We also like to thank Reinhard Schulte-Braucks, Magdi Khair and Robbie Burch for their excellent presentations in the introductory session.

Last but not least we are indebted to all coworkers, members and friends of the Chair of “Chemical Physics of Materials” in the Chemistry Department at the Université Libre de Bruxelles for helping us to run CAPoC7 successfully. Our special thanks go to Adam Bundhoo for his readiness in providing support whenever and wherever necessary.

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