

Preface

Since 2005, when the first edition of what is now called GLOBAL STONE CONGRESS took place in Brazil, participants from several countries who work on dimension stone realized this type of meeting should proceed, involving as much as possible, professionals and academics exchanging experience and scientific knowledge in the subject. Italy (2008) and Spain (2010) organized the next ones and then Portugal hosted the Congress in Alentejo, on July 2012.

The meeting was sponsored by several associations of the natural stone sector and by the counties where the Congress activities occurred, from scientific sessions to field trips and cultural events.

Over 150 Congress participants submitted material for presentation and from those, 41 peer-reviewed papers were selected to be published in this Special issue of Key Engineering Materials. The subjects covered several areas and were gathered into 6 chapters for publication:

- Resources, Exploration and Exploitation
- Manufacturing Processes, Tools and Optimization
- Environmental Management; Recycling and Valuation of Byproducts
- Characterization and New Products
- Natural Stone in Architecture and Design
- Cultural, Economic and Social Issues.

Contributions of authors were diverse, valuable and their effort to spread their experience was appreciated, as well as the work of the reviewers, who helped a lot with their knowledge, expertise and patience, improving the quality of many writings. We are grateful for that.

It is our hope that other countries where the traditional work on dimension stone is well developed will participate on the organization of the next meetings and that we can maintain and project to the future this healthy chain of cooperation already started.

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CEVALOR – Centro Tecnológico para o Aproveitamento e Valorização das Rochas Ornamentais e Industriais

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