

PREFACE

The International Symposium on Metastable, Mechanically Alloyed and Nanocrystalline Materials, ISMANAM-97, was held in Sitges (Barcelona), Spain, from 31 August to 5 September 1997. The Symposium follows a series of symposia previously held in Kyoto, Grenoble, Québec City and Rome. About 210 participants from 28 countries attended the Symposium and more than 230 papers were presented of which 21 as invited lectures, 62 as oral and about 150 as poster contributions. After the review process, 165 papers have been accepted for publication in this special issue of Materials Science Forum. This strong participation is a clear indication of the growing interest in this field of materials science.

A major objective of the Organisers was to ensure that the various disciplines engaged in the study, development and commercialisation of these materials were well represented at ISMANAM-97. A second objective was to have as many students as possible attend and contribute to the Symposium. The Organisers believe that both objectives were achieved. In fact, 25% of the participants were postgraduate students.

The technical objectives of ISMANAM-97 were to address key issues associated with science and technology in this rapidly evolving field of research and to promote contact between basic research efforts and technological needs for real industrial applications. Major topics included synthesis and processing of metals, intermetallics, oxides, polymers, nanocomposites and others; characterisation; thermodynamics and modelling; mechanisms and kinetics of loss of metastability and coarsening; properties such as mechanical, magnetic, catalytic..., and applications.

ISMANAM's Steering Committee has accepted the candidature of Dr. Andrzej Calka and his colleagues to hold ISMANAM-98 in Wollongong, Australia. The committee has also tentatively accepted the candidature for ISMANAM-99 in Germany. A definitive announcement will be made in Wollongong. The Steering Committee awarded two prizes during the Sitges conference to honour the important contributions of two scientists to the field of Metastable, Mechanically Alloyed and Nanocrystalline Materials.

The ISMANAM-97 prize for best scientist was awarded to Professor Antonio Hernando, Director of Instituto de Magnetismo Aplicado Salvador Velayos, Las Rozas, Madrid, Spain, for his significant contributions to the study of magnetic properties of nanostructures and amorphous materials.

The ISMANAM-97 prize for best young scientist under 35 years old was awarded to Dr. Thomas Klassen from the Institute for Materials Research, GKSS Research Centre, Geesthacht, Germany, for his contribution in the development of Intermetallic/Ceramic composites.

We wish to give our most sincere thanks to all the members of the Committees, the chairpersons, the invited speakers and all the delegates for their interest in participating, for their stimulating presentations and for their contribution to the success of the Symposium. We also owe a special debt of gratitude to the manuscript review committee who devoted a substantial amount of time to preparing the detailed reviews. We would also like to thank all the people involved in the organisation of ISMANAM-97, whose collaboration is very much appreciated. Finally, we wish to acknowledge all the institutions and companies who have supported the Symposium, without whose help it would not have been possible.

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