

ChemCYS 2016. An Inspiring and Stimulating Conference for Young Chemists Worldwide

by Santiago Gómez-Ruiz (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, Spain)

In memory of Professor Sir Harold Kroto and Professor Paul De Bièvre

The **Chemistry Conference for Young Scientists** (ChemCYS) took place in Blankenberge, Belgium, 16-18 March 2016. This conference was organized by the Youth Division of the Royal Flemish Chemical Society (Jong-KVCV) and covered most current topics in Chemistry. Over three days, 341 participants from 39 countries all over the world (including 25 non-EU countries) travelled to the Belgian coastal town to take part in this conference, which offered a very productive and fresh atmosphere focused on the new generation of chemists and current scientific trends.

This excellent scientific event relied on the participation of renowned chemists, such as Prof. Dr Sir Harold Kroto (Nobel Laureate 1996), who, in a pre-recorded presentation, gave an amazing talk on diffuse interstellar bonds; Prof. Dr Karin Öberg, who introduced us to the hidden and unknown world of the Chemistry of Planet formation; and Prof. Dr Bert Meijer, who spoke about multifunctional supramolecular systems. Just as important were the six parallel sessions, with 110 inspiring talks by young chemists, and the various poster sessions, with 116 contributions. For some PhD students, this conference was the first opportunity to present their work to a specialized audience. Therefore, ChemCYS tried to create a constructive and non-intimidating atmosphere for its participants. This stimulated helpful and beneficial discussions by all participants and made the conference an excellent forum for chemists in an early stage of their careers.

The development of the participants' soft skills was taken into account by the organizers. There were sessions on job hunting, CV analysis, social media training, and reviewing, in which professionals of several companies and universities were involved. These more informal sessions helped the attendants to take decisions with respect to some important steps in their scientific careers.



Personally, I have had the honor to participate in the last two editions of this conference as an invited speaker giving different seminars on soft skills. I have observed not only the professionalism, enthusiasm, and excellent organization of Jong-KVCV, but also the motivation and willingness to learn of the attendees. I am convinced that events like ChemCYS are the best forums to assure networking and promote a generational relay in Chemistry, to maintain and improve active levels in research.

A collection of papers based on presentations at this ChemCYS will appear in *Pure and Applied Chemistry*. Geert-Jan Graulus, President ChemCYS 2016, will act as conference editor, together with Hugh D. Burrows, *PAC* Scientific editor.

More details about the event, including a detailed program, are available at www.chemcys.be.

[Editorial note: Soon after the closing of the conference, we were informed of the passing of Professor Paul De Bièvre, who attended the event as an IUPAC representative. Paul was an enthusiastic supporter of involving young practitioners in the international community. In his earlier report covering the ChemCYS 2014, he concluded: "it was a very well organized conference where the average age of the participants was about 15-20 years below the average age of participants of most Conferences I have attended before. And it gave me a lot of satisfaction to be able represent IUPAC to young chemists who were not familiar with the Union."]