

Anniversary greetings: A retrospective of 20 years of ECASIA conferences

Twenty years ago, in 1985, I had the privilege of organizing the 1st ECASIA conference, in Veldhoven, The Netherlands.

At that time, ECASIA was in its early childhood; it had been born just a few years before, in late 1982, from the recognition by members of the Dutch/Belgian SCADEG Group (Structure and Chemical Analysis of Thin Films and Interfaces) and the UK ESCA Users group of the need for a European forum for applied surface analysis. The persons present at this historic founding-meeting were (in alphabetical order): D. Briggs, J. E. Castle, W. van Ooij, J. C. Rivière, A. P. von Rosenstiel, M. P. Seah, J. van Vreeken and H. W. Werner.

The idea was to organize once every two years a Europe-based international conference in which scientists from universities and (material) scientists/analysts from industry would meet to exchange their experience and ideas on any topic related to applied surface and interface analysis. The university scientists would mainly provide the basic knowledge; the scientists from industry would concentrate on the application of the different methods to technological problems. The vendors as third-party contributors would deliver the necessary instrumentation, continuously developed and improved for the needs identified and derived from the previous conferences.

At that time the people involved in the applications of surface and interface analysis were not ranked very high in the academic world of surface science; they were considered to be more or less just instrument operators. Nowadays their work is more appreciated and they are considered material scientists rather than just operators. International conferences related to surface analysis at that time were dominated by reports on (the necessary) fundamental studies. Application to practical problems and/or industrial technology was considered inferior. How times have changed in the meanwhile!

Nevertheless, we dared to organize the 1st ECASIA with emphasis on the application of surface and interface analysis, keeping in mind that fundamentals are the basis for any

application. We had about 300 participants. Encouraged by the success of this first conference we organized a second one in Stuttgart (with Siegfried Hofmann as local chairman). It was a success again, as we had hoped. Today, in September 2005, we have the 11th ECASIA Conference with 470 participants from 56 countries.

So, it appears that the concept of ECASIA still meets the expectations of the participants. This success can be ascribed to the following factors:

- (1) The contributions of the participants by presenting their results as lectures or posters, and the networking among the delegates.
- (2) The publication of the presentations as separate ECASIA Proceedings volumes of *Surface and Interface Analysis*.
- (3) The participation of the vendors in the exhibitions with continuously improved instruments.
- (4) The untiring efforts of the members of the ECASIA International Advisory Board (IAB).
- (5) The steady work of the members of the ECASIA International Steering Committee, and in particular of Martin Seah as its secretary who has quietly but steadily worked behind the scenes on our long-term strategy, The Spirit of ECASIA.
- (6) Last but not the least, the organization of conferences with a broad scope on a high level by the various Local Chairmen, in close interaction with the ISC, always emphasizing the highlights of the moment.

So, I am confident that in yet another 20 years, the participants will still be enjoying and profiting from an ECASIA conference as you did, I hope, this time in Vienna.

My best wishes for the future of ECASIA

Helmut W. Werner

1st President of ECASIA International Steering
Committee and 1st Local Chairman,
Vienna, Austria
September 2005