

E.C.L.C. '91 Meeting Report

The European Conference on Liquid Crystals, E.C.L.C. '91, was held in Courmayeur, Valle d' Aosta, Italy from 10 to 17 March 1991. The conference was organized by the Italian Liquid Crystal Group (GNCL), now more than ten years old, under the auspices of the Italian Chemical Society (SCI), Italian Physical Society (SIF), Physics of Matter Consortium (INFM) and was made possible by generous grants from the regional governments of Valle d' Aosta and of Piemonte, CNR and various other sponsors as well as help from TECDIS, a large locally based liquid crystal display firm.

The subtitle of the conference was "Crossroads of Science and Technology" to underline that ECLC '91 was the first European Conference to be held after the great changes that have taken place in Eastern Europe and after new possibilities for freedom of movement and of collaboration have opened. One of the aims of the organizers was indeed to try and bring together a large number of active researchers from all over Europe and this was certainly achieved. The conference was attended by 175 participants from 20 countries, with the largest groups coming from Italy (59), USSR (31), France (19), Germany (11), Poland (11), UK (7), Yugoslavia (6).

The scientific activity was structured around four main topics: Films and Interfaces (including biosystems), Organometallic Liquid Crystals, Molecular Dynamics, New Developments in LCD. The first three themes were introduced by plenary lectures: L.D. Blinov (Institute of Crystallography, Moscow) talked on "Langmuir-Blodgett films and liquid crystals: properties and Stark spectroscopy", A.M. Levelut (Lab. de Physique des Solides, Orsay) on "Molecular organization in metallo-organic mesophases" and F. Volino (CENG, Grenoble) discussed "On the modelisation of flexible molecules in a liquid phase". There were 16 invited lectures, with contributions from F. Livolant, B. Jerome, S.A. Pikin, F. Noack, J.K. Moscicki, V.S. Rachevich, D.W. Bruce, A.M. Giroud-Godquin, M. Ghedini, T. Sluckin, C.C. Huang, R. Dabrowski, N.V. Usoltceva, P. Maltese, E.P. Raynes, P. Laggner, 23 oral communications and 120 poster contributions. The problem of technological applications, relations between University and Industry and more

generally of “Technology in the new Europe” was debated in a round table by speakers from various western and eastern centres: S. Lagerwall (Chalmers University, Göteborg), M. Schadt (Hoffman-La Roche, Basel), R.B. Leslie (Unilever), Roggero (Eniricerche, Milano), A. Smirnov (Minsk Radioengineering Inst., Minsk).

All the lectures were given at the “Centro Congressi” right in the centre of Courmayeur and with a great view of the Alps. The atmosphere was quite informal and a good deal of lively discussion and even arguing went on, as one could rightly expect from such an event. Attendance at the conferences was good, even though a strong attraction was represented by the nearby mountains and ski facilities. Even then the right balance between “inspiration and perspiration” was probably achieved and everyone had the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful scenery of Monte Bianco and maybe get some hints on liquid crystals too (see figure !).

During the Conference the Annual Meeting of the Italian Liquid Crystal Group was also held, where it was decided to join the International Liquid Crystal Society. The organization of the next International Liquid Crystal Conference, that will take place in Pisa, 21-26 June 1992 was also discussed.

The papers presented at the meeting and accepted after normal refereeing will be published in a special issue of *Molec. Cryst. Liq. Cryst.*

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