

## **DIOXIN 2002**

### **22<sup>nd</sup> International Symposium on Halogenated Environmental Organic Pollutants and POPs**

**Barcelona, Spain**

**August 11<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>, 2002**

More than 850 delegates from 35 countries attended this conference: Japan (166 delegates), Spain (111) and the United States of America (108) were the countries with the highest representation. From a scientific point of view, the conference was a success, with more than 650 presented papers, which originated a 5-volume proceeding, approximately 2,500 pages. The conference finished with a special session on POPs in the Mediterranean Basin, as a way to focus the dioxin and other POPs problems in the geographical area where the Congress took place. Thirty parallel sessions were arranged during the Symposium.

The aim of the Organising Committee was to make of “Dioxin 2002” a forum where participants were able to discuss and exchange the latest results of research on analytical methodologies, progression of inventories, effects on human health, and so many other aspects related to the topic of the Symposium. POPs also seems to receive, from Governments and International Organizations a special interest that without doubt was reflected in the meeting.

Dioxin 2002 was held at the Barcelona’s Congress Centre in Montjuïc, in the centre of the city. In addition to the interesting topics of the Symposium the participants had the opportunity to enjoy visiting Barcelona and its surroundings.

There are many ways to evaluate the importance and the success (or failure) of such an event. For example, we can talk about the participants. With more than 850 delegates from 35 countries, the Symposium was, once again, a pole of attraction for POPs researchers. Japan provided the largest representation, followed by Spain and the USA. Having more than 30 attendees were Germany, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Italy, and Belgium. These numbers are significant due to the strain on international relationships after the attack



against the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. The number of international travellers fell significantly and other scientific meetings were suspended or delayed after the events of 9-11.

These attendees presented 650 papers distributed in 25 topics (some of them divided into two or more sessions). In addition to the historical topics (e.g. Analysis, Epidemiology, Environmental Transport & Fate, Ecotoxicology) others were presented as new topics, due to increasing interest in these themes. This was the case of, for example, Quality in POPs Analysis. A total of 233 communications were presented as oral, and more than 410 as posters. In addition, four plenary presentations on subjects of general interest were among the highlights. These presentations filled more than 2,500 pages of Proceedings, arranged in five volumes. Or, translated to an informatics' language, they represent 150 Megabytes of information as pdf files.

These numbers give an idea of the importance of Dioxin 2002. But beyond the exchange of viewpoints and information, this Congress was able to connect not only scientists but friends. And, maybe, this is the aspect of the Symposium of which we are proudest (in fact, we cannot forget that Symposium comes from the Greek  $\pi$ , and in Greece it was a mix of banquet, show and gathering in which only men are allowed; fortunately it has changed in some aspects). Barcelona was again, as it was ten years before<sup>1</sup>, the siege of a meeting on which the work was not apart of the leisure. Scientific knowledge is changing more and more quickly every year and, maybe, some of the innovative approaches of Dioxin 2002 are being surpassed by new techniques and discoveries. But, as members of the Organising Committee, we will never forget this “crazy” week in which we discovered so much about dioxins and friendship.



A moment to finally relax after a chaotic week!



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<sup>1</sup> For the organisation of the Olympic Games in 1992, Barcelona was preceded by a Korean city (Seoul) and followed by an American city (Atlanta). For the organisation of the Dioxin 2002 Symposium, Barcelona was preceded by a Korean city (Gyeongju) and followed by an American one (Boston). We think its a funny coincidence.



Good time, good friends, great symposium!

J. Rivera and J.J. Llerena  
President and Secretary of Dioxin 2002  
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