Guest Editorial

This special issue of the *Journal of Membrane Science* contains selected papers presented at the Symposium on "Synthetic Membranes in Science and Industry" held in Tübingen August 29–September 1, 1994. The Symposium was the 7th of a series which started in 1977 when the University of Tübingen celebrated its 500th anniversary with a number of scientific meetings and workshops. The first Symposium was a rather local affair with a limited number of participants coming from academic institutions of the Federal Republic of Germany discussing mainly fundamental aspects of membrane science. Since then the interest in synthetic membranes and their application has grown steadily and today the membrane based industry has a significant technical and economical impact in our society. This growth of the practical relevance of membrane science and technology was also reflected in the 7th Tübingen Symposium which was devoted to stimulate the dialogue between the academic community involved in the basic aspects of membrane science and the industry utilizing and exploiting these developments. With 300 participants and a comprehensive program covering in 50 oral and 110 poster presentations all major aspects of modern membrane technology the objectives of the Symposium were fully achieved. Most of the papers were rather application oriented, discussing problems related to the practical use of membrane and membrane processes. A number of presentations dealt with the use of functional membranes and carrier facilitated transport and membrane reactors.

The 7th Tübingen Symposium was, just as the previous meetings, a truly international affair with the majority of the participants coming from the European Union. Remarkable, however, was the large number of papers presented by authors coming from East Europe and the former Soviet Union. With their interesting presentations and lively discussions they

contributed significantly to the success of the meeting and provided a comprehensive insight to the state-of-the-art of membrane science in Eastern Europe.

Special attention was paid to the posters presented during the Symposium. All posters were available during the entire meeting, always drawing a large audience involved in lively discussions which were not limited by the rigid time schedule of the oral presentations.

The Symposium also provided the forum for the general assembly of the European Society of Membrane Science and Technology which had organized the meeting together with the DECHEMA (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Chemisches Apparatewesen, Chemische Technik und Biotechnologie e.V.) and the University of Tübingen.

Thanks to the efficient organization through the DECHEMA and generous hospitality of the University of Tübingen, which provided all facilities free of charge, the registration fee for the Symposium could be kept very moderate.

Following the tradition of the previous meetings a number of selected papers are published in this special issue of the *Journal of Membrane Science* while another series of papers that dealt mainly with water treatment problems are published in *Desalination*.

The organizers would like to thank the authors for the thorough preparation of their manuscripts and making them available not only for the participants of the Symposium but also to all readers of these Journals.

H. Strathmann
University of Twente
Faculty of Chemical Engineering
Enschede, The Netherlands