Foreword

Until recently, process analytical chemistry was a fairly neglected branch of analytical chemistry. The main concern of analytical chemists in the operation of industrial chemical processes was restricted, in general, to quality control of raw materials and (end) products. Process control proper was, and still is, based mainly on monitoring of operational conditions like temperature, pressure, flow and level. Process control is the domain of process and system engineers, people with a background of chemical technology, mechanics or electrotechnology. Even when monitoring of chemical components was considered to be indispensable for good control, the use and development of process analyzers took place largely without the knowledge of analytical chemists. This has led to a distinct gap between experts in the field of process analysis and analytical chemists. The main objective of the ANATECH conference was to make a start in bridging this gulf and to bring together industrial and academic analytical chemists and those involved in process control and process analysis. This was believed the more important because it is our firm conviction that the need for process analysis will increase steadily in the near future. The main reason for expecting this growth is the strong economic competition that places ever-increasing demands on the quality of products and the optimal use of raw materials and energy. Moreover, the more stringent statutory regulations about the kind and amount of compounds that may be drained off into the environment require more on-stream analysis.

The reactions of the participants indicated that the conference was a success. However, the emphasis placed on economic competition as a main reason for the increasing importance of process analysis, exposes the uncertain basis for organizing conferences on this topic: scientists from industry involved in process control or operation are generally confronted with a strict embargo on any communication about aspects concerned with process operation. As the active participation of workers in the field of process analysis is a prerequisite for fruitful discussions, a possible follow-up to this conference will depend strongly on finding an answer to this problem of industrial secrecy. Discussions are in progress, but suggestions will be greatly welcomed.

W. E. van der Linden,
Twente University of Technology, Enschede, The Netherlands.

R. J. Mulder,
AKZO Chemie Nederland B.V., Deventer, The Netherlands.

L. J. Overman,
N. V. KEMA, Arnhem, The Netherlands.