

A Brief History¹

by *Silvia E. Braslavsky*

The IUPAC Symposium on Photochemistry was started in 1964 by the initiative of George Hammond, and held in Strasbourg, France.² It was then called International Symposium on Organic Photochemistry. Since 1967, its name is IUPAC Symposium on Photochemistry and it is regularly held in even years, usually at the end of July.³ This Symposium was only once held outside Europe in 2006, in Kyoto, Japan (see table) and is planned to be in Japan again in 2016. The number of Japanese participants in the Symposia has been very large for many years.

In fact, 1964 was a banner year for photochemistry in that the Gordon Conference series and the IUPAC series were both started that year. However, the physical photochemists already had two series going: (1) the series which later became the International Conference on Photochemistry (ICP), which started in 1962,⁴ and (2) the Informal Conference on Photochemistry, started by Francis Blacet in 1952 and held in North America every two years⁵ until 2000, when it was held in San Juan, Puerto Rico.⁶

The rationale behind typically having the IUPAC Symposium on Photochemistry in Europe is as follows. The International Conference on Photochemistry (ICP) is held around the world in odd years in Canada, USA, Japan, China, Russia, Europe, etc. In 2013, it was held in Leuven, Belgium.⁷ The Gordon Conference on Organic Photochemistry has been held in the USA since 1964, in odd years since 1965 (to alternate with the IUPAC Symposium on Photochemistry), and renamed Gordon Conference on Photochemistry in 2001. This Conference, together with the Inter-American Photochemical Society (I-APS)⁷ Conference (every year in early January), serves the North American photochemical community very well.

There is also an I-APS meeting in Latin-America every five years, most recently in 2011 in Mendoza, Argentina, and previously in 2006, in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil. Information on the history of these meetings and of Encuentro Latinoamericano de Fotoquímica y Fotobiología (the Latin-American Photochemical and Photobiological Community or ELAFOT) up to 2005 has been summarized in an article by Braslavsky and Simon.⁸ The last ELAFOT was held in Córdoba, Argentina, in October 2012.⁹

The Asian and Oceanian Photochemistry Association

(APA) holds regular meetings in the area.¹⁰ The 7th Asian Photochemistry Conference 2012 (APC2012) was held in Osaka, Japan, in November 2012.¹¹

Within Europe, the increasing contacts between the national sections of the European Photochemistry Association (EPA)¹² have led to the support by EPA of various bi- and multi-lateral small European meetings,¹³ among them a series called Central European Photochemical Conference (CECP), started in 1998.¹⁴ As the Europeans do not have an extra "European Photochemical Conference," the IUPAC Symposium also serves the purpose of hosting the European photochemical community; the General Council of the EPA usually meets at these symposia, and the EPA occasionally sponsors plenary lectures.

The chair of a given IUPAC Symposium on Photochemistry chooses, after adequate consultation, the chair of the Symposium four years later. The selected chair chooses the location and local organizer, requests support by IUPAC and is responsible for the scientific standard and quality control of the Symposium, together with the selected scientific committee for that Symposium. Although the Symposia were all held in Europe (with the exception of Kyoto in 2006), 10 of the first 20 Scientific Chairs were from the USA, alternating with those from Europe. The decline in this practice reflects both declining USA participation, mainly due to the reduced support by the North American funding agencies, as well as simplified logistics when the Scientific Chair is located near the conference site.

During the Symposium there is usually a regular meeting of the IUPAC Sub-Committee of Photochemistry to discuss ongoing projects and consider the possibility of new ones.

Since 1988, the Porter Medal¹⁵ has been formally presented at the IUPAC Photochemistry Symposium, followed by a lecture of the medallist. The medal arose from a valedictory symposium held in London in 1986 following the retirement of George Porter as Director of the Royal Institution in London upon his election as President of the Royal Society. The choice of Porter medallist is made by the EPA, Inter-American Photochemistry Society, and Asian and Oceanian Photochemistry Association, the first medal being presented to George Porter himself in Bologna, in 1988.

Several additional awards are presented during the Symposium by IUPAC and by various journals to posters and oral contributions by young photochemists. Since 2008, the EPA has presented the Prize for the best PhD Thesis in Photochemistry¹⁶

and since 2010, the EPA-PPS Prize for the most cited paper of an EPA member in *Photochemical & Photobiological Sciences*, the society-owned journal, has been awarded; the presentation of each prize is accompanied by a lecture from the prizewinner.

Most of the Plenary and Invited Lectures of the Symposia are published in the IUPAC journal *Pure and Applied Chemistry*.¹

An International Foundation of Photochemistry (IFP) with headquarters in Germany¹⁷ was created in 1974 with the main purpose of helping to finance the preparation steps of the Symposia. Its funds come from the accumulated revenues obtained during the Symposia. The Foundation board also has regular meetings during the Symposia.

The history of the IUPAC Symposia on Photochemistry is a successful story with a promising future. In the July 2012 Symposium in Coimbra,¹⁸ there were 640 participants from 53 countries and many young colleagues presented interesting, novel results in the form of talks and posters. A collection of invited papers based on selected presentations is published in the July 2013 issue of *Pure and Applied Chemistry*.¹⁹

The next Symposium is planned for 13-18 July 2014 in Bordeaux, France²⁰ and the Scientific Chair is Dario Bassani. The following Symposium is planned for 2016 in Osaka, Japan and the Scientific Chairman is Tetsuro Majima. 🏆

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References

1. With the exception of those for Symposium IV in Baden-Baden, the proceedings of all other Symposia are found in www.iupac.org/publications/pac/conferences/family/PHOTO
2. iupac.org/publications/pac/pdf/1964/pdf/0904x_vii.pdf
3. iupac.org/publications/pac/conferences/Enschede_1967-07-16s
4. G. Wyman, *Inter-American Photochemical Society Newsletter*, Vol. 22(2), November 1999.
5. F. C. Blacet, *Photochem Photobiol.* (1974) **19**, 384
6. www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A2=MOLECULAR-DYNAMICS-NEWS;df37611a.99
7. www.i-aps.org

No.	Year	Site	Scientific Chair	Organizer
I	1964	Strasbourg, France	G. S. Hammond, US	J. Levisalles
II	1967	Enschede, The Netherlands	W. G. Dauben, US	E. Havinga and M. Kronenberg
III	1970	St Moritz, Switzerland	D. Bryce-Smith, UK	K. Schaffner
IV	1972	Baden-Baden, Germany	H. E. Zimmerman, US	D. Döpp
V	1974	Enschede, The Netherlands	O. L. Chapman, US	J. J. C. Mulder
VI	1976	Aix-en-Provence, France	K. Schaffner, Switzerland	J. Kossanyi, and M. Julliard
VII	1978	Leuven, Belgium	N. J. Turro, US	F. de Schryver
VIII	1980	Seefeld, Austria	H. Dürr, Germany	J. G. Schantl
IX	1982	Pau, France	J. Jousot-Dubien, France	E. Poquet and H. Bouas-Laurent
X	1984	Interlaken, Switzerland	D. J. Whitten, US	A. M. Braun
XI	1986	Lisbon, Portugal	F. Wilkinson, UK	S. M. B. Costa
XII	1988	Bologna, Italy	V. Balzani, Italy	F. Bolletta
XIII	1990	Warwick, UK	F. D. Lewis, US	R. S. Davidson
XIV	1992	Leuven, Belgium	F. De Schryver, Belgium	D. De Keukeleire
XV	1994	Prague, Czech Republic	J. Michl, US	I. Stibor
XVI	1996	Helsinki, Finland	J. Wirz, Switzerland	H. Lemmetyinen
XVII	1998	Sitges, Spain	R. A. Caldwell, US	J. Font
XVIII	2000	Dresden, Germany	S. E. Braslavsky, Germany	T. Wolff
XIX	2002	Budapest, Hungary	H. D. Roth, US	J. Nyitrai
XX	2004	Granada, Spain	M. A. Miranda, Spain	B. Quintero
XXI	2006	Kyoto, Japan	M. Irie, Japan	A. Osuka
XXII	2008	Göteborg, Sweden	D. Gust, US	B. Albinsson
XXIII	2010	Ferrara, Italy	F. Scandola, Italy	C. Chiorboli
XXIV	2012	Coimbra, Portugal	H. D. Burrows, Portugal	A. J. M. Valente
XXV	2014	Bordeaux, France	D. M. Bassani, France	
XXVI	2016	Osaka, Japan	T. Majima, Japan	

8. S. E. Braslavsky, J. Simon, *Photochem Photobiol.* (2005) **81**, 768-70.

9. Many of the papers presented in this ELAFOT meeting are published in *Photochemistry and Photobiology* (2013) 89, 1269-1470.

10. www.asianphotochem.com

11. www.photochemistry.jp/apc2012

12. www.photochemistry.eu

13. U. Mazzucato, The History of the European Photochemical Association, in "Photochemistry", Royal Society of Chemistry, Ed.: Angelo Albini (2012) pp 195-229.

14. www.cecp.at

15. www.portermedal.com

16. www.photochemistry.eu/phd_price.php

17. At present (2013), the Administrative Board of the IFP is constituted by Sandra Monti, Axel Griesbeck and Haruo Inoue.

18. www.photoiupac2012.com

19. iupac.org/publications/pac/conferences/Coimbra_2012-07-15k/

20. www.photoiupac2014.fr

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