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Editorial

This issue contains the refereed papers presented at the Fourth International Conference on Microwave Materials and their Applications, MMA2006. The conference took place on the 12–15 June 2006, at the University of Oulu, Oulu, Finland. The main organizer of the conference was the Microwave Electroceramics Group of the University of Oulu, and it was endorsed by the European Ceramic Society (ECerS), the American Ceramic Society (ACerS), the Ceramic Society of Japan (CSJ), the Korean Ceramic Society (KorCerS) and the Ceramic Interconnect Initiative (CII). At MMA2006 there were about 180 participants from over 25 countries with delegates from Europe, Japan, Korea, People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Australia, Brazil, Canada, India and USA. During the 4 days conference, 2 plenary lectures, 20 invited talks, 70 oral presentations and 50 poster papers were presented and discussed.

The conference now arranged belongs to the series of MMA conferences with previous ones held in Bled Slovenia (2000), York UK (2002) and Inuyama Japan (2004). The main purpose of the International Conferences on Microwave Materials and their Applications, operating in association with International Network (http://www2.umist.ac.uk/materials/research/microwave), is to gather together scientists and industry researching and utilizing these rapidly developing materials. Since this field of science has very strong multidisciplinary character, the MMA conferences form an ideal forum for discussing the latest development from basic materials' research to industrial opportunities highlighting also need of delicate modeling, components' design and components' and materials' characterization tools and methods. The main topics at MMA2006 were the latest development of dielectric microwave materials, their characterization methods and applications investigated. The research and utilization of novel materials like nanostructured materials, metamaterials, tunable dielectric materials, ceramic/polymer composites, ferrites and ferroelectrics for microwave applications were also widely presented and discussed.

Apart from the scientific side of the conference, social activities were organized to foster relationships between the delegates. These activities included lunches, a gala dinner and welcome party especially sponsored by the City of Oulu, and additionally the participants had an opportunity to visit Santa Claus in the Arctic Circle. After the conference one workshop and one lecture series was arranged. The main purpose of the technical workshop, International Hi-Tech 3D Packaging Workshop, was to enable academic professionals and industrial representatives to share their knowledge, exchange ideas and discuss their experiences in system integration needing dense, robust and compact solutions. This 2-day workshop was organized by IMAPS Nordic, the Microwave Electroceramics Group of the University of Oulu and Northern Electronics Industries Development (NEID) and participating delegates were both from research institutes and industrial companies. The lecture series arranged at the same time with the technical workshop, orientated in characterization of materials properties at high frequencies and components' design related.

The MMA2006 conference was financially sponsored by Nokia, LK Products, Filtronic Comtek, Powerwave Technologies, Elektrobit Microwave, Selmic, Aspocomp, IMAPS Nordic, Digipolis, the Academy of Finland, Infotech Oulu, City of Oulu and the University of Oulu. The organizers acknowledge the sponsors, and the societies previously mentioned for their endorsement. The conference chairs gratefully acknowledge the work of secretarial assistance of Ms. Renata Sebö, Ms. Sirpa Annanperä, Ms. Hannele Rinne and Ms. Salme Ollila in organizing this conference. Special thanks are due to all the participants at the conference, plenary and invited speakers, oral and poster contributors, session chairs and finally to students responsible for practical arrangements. Finally, we acknowledge all the reviewers for their valuable help. Thank you all!

After a hard competition the International Advisory Board of the MMA2006 decided that the next MMA will be held at Hangzhou in China during November, 2008. For details, please contact Prof. X.M. Chen, email: xmchen@cmsce.zju.edu.cn.

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