

Editor's note

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This JSST 2016 August issue is the *1st Special Issue* containing invited and award winning contributions presented at the very successful XVIII International Sol–Gel Conference held September 6–11, 2015 in Kyoto, Japan (see the various prefaces in the next pages). You will find papers from one of the Keynote lecture, those from most of the invited lectures and all those from the award winning lectures, i.e. the Ulrich Award and the best and excellent posters. Because of the very interesting lectures presented during the oral sessions, it was also decided to prepare for the first time a *2nd Special Issue* which will contain written versions of the *best oral presentations* presented during the many sessions of the Sol–Gel 2015 meeting. The lectures have been selected by the chairwoman/chairman of each oral session. Some papers are still under revision but 12 are already published Online First. The printed 2nd JSST Special Issue should therefore appear in autumn 2016.

I also take this opportunity to inform all the JSST readers of several new developments for our journal.

First you have certainly noted that our journal has a completely new cover design. This important change has been suggested by Sara Kate Heukerott, JSST editor at Springer, and worked out by Springer's cover design team. After many discussions with the JSST editors as well as with J.M. Nedelec and M. Takahashi, ISGS president and president elect, respectively, and V. Kessler, ISGS board member in charge of the relations with our journal, two final designs have been approved, one for the normal issues and one for the special issues. This new cover is shown for the first time and will be used for the forthcoming issues;

we hope that you like it. The title has been slightly modified by adding a sentence about the role of JSST and all covers have now a window in which a picture, a particularly interesting graphical abstract, etc., can be pasted; a brief description of the subject of this insertion is written in the journal's front matter.

- The second important information concerns the nomination of Young Assistant Editors. During the Kyoto meeting, it was also suggested to appoint a few young and outstanding scientists working in new and promising sol–gel fields and willing to invite outstanding authors working in such attractive topics. For the selection, all JSST editors and all members of the International Editorial Board have been consulted and asked to propose a candidate. Among all the answers, seven scientists have been selected and all of them have accepted our proposal. We would like to welcome them officially! Each one has sent us three important topics which they found particularly interesting for the future. During the first year, each one will focus his activity on one of them and all of them have agreed to find three outstanding author(s) willing to submit an *invited paper* for JSST (either a review of such emerging fields or a typical R&D paper emphasizing outstanding results and promises). They shall also write an *extended editorial* summarizing the importance of these new fields or a *Perspective article* to be published in JSST about these emerging field(s) of R&D informing in this way the readers why it is important to develop such R&D directions in the future. These papers, for the moment, will be edited by the present board of JSST editors and, when accepted, will appear at the top of the JSST Table of Contents under the title *Invited paper(s)*. We hope that the potential invited authors will welcome the invitations of the Assistant Editors.

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The names of these seven new Assistant Editors (also added now in the JSST written issues) and the chosen topics are listed below:

- Chen Xiabo, University of Missouri, Kansas City, MO 64110, USA
Sol-Gel technology for future smart cities
- Falcaro Paolo, Graz University of Technology, 8010 Graz, Austria
Sol-gel technology for the controlled localization of fundamental materials
- Jitianu Andrei, Lehman College, City University of New York, 10468 New York, USA
Characterization Techniques
- Jones Julian, Imperial College London, South Kensington Campus, SW7 2BP London
Advances materials in regenerative medicine
- Malfatti Luca, Università di Sassari, 07041 Alghero, Italy
Carbon based nanophotonics in sol–gel materials
- Martucci Alex, Università di Padova, 35131 Padova, Italy
New materials for 3D/2D printing-additive manufacturing
- Tokudome Yasuaki, Osaka Prefecture University, Osaka, Japan
Aqueous sol–gel for green process

Two months ago, again with the help of all editorial members and as had been agreed during the Kyoto meeting, a list of the main areas of R&D in the sol–gel fields was assembled. It contains 17 items from basic chemistries, fundamental processing's, aerogels, functional coatings, sol–gel, and hybrid materials for various applications, devices, educational aspects, etc. The authors submitting a paper have to choose one of the area, and when their paper

is accepted, it appears with the selected subtitle. We hope in this way that it is easier and faster for the readers to choose the articles linked to their own studies.

Finally, as of a few weeks, a special software program checking plagiarism has been installed in our peer review system. All submitted papers are scanned and analyzed with this program by a specialist of Springer. When a high potential of plagiarism is detected, the editors get now such information (a grade and a copy of the submitted paper with all the sentences already published in other papers highlighted with full references of the original papers. It is then up to them, after very carefully analyzing the results given by this program, to reject or accept to send the submission for reviewing. In case of a rejection without further reviewing, they have of course to inform in details the authors about their decision. In case of doubts, the editors usually consult the Editor-in-Chief to have a second opinion. Several submissions have been already rejected and we hope in this way to get in the really original and more attractive submissions.

All these modifications have not been done alone and Sara Kate Heukerott, and I would like to deeply thank all the JSST editors, all the members of the Editorial Board, some members of the ISGS and the persons responsible for the production of the journal for their important contributions in implementing these changes. We hope that, with the help of these and other key developments, JSST will drastically improve in order to stay one of the most important journals reporting new developments in materials.

Hon. Prof. Dr. Michel A. Aegerter
JSST Editor-in-Chief