

Editorial

This special issue of Applied Physics B – Lasers and Optics features papers based on talks presented at the Spring Meeting of the German Physical Society, which took place at the University of Munich, March 22–26, 2004. As in previous years, the invitation to submit a new manuscript was suggested by the chairpersons of all the sessions in the newly established "Quantum Optics and Photonics" section of the German Physical Society. The compilation highlights some of the most exciting developments in the field, in particular with quantum gases and ultrashort laser pulses. With 14 contributions, the number of papers in this special issue is larger than in previous years. The growing response is a clear indication that the scientific community wants a special issue related to the Spring Meeting. In fact, the increasing number of contributions strengthens its tradition.

We would like to thank all the authors for their excellent papers and all referees for helpful and fast responses. This made it possible to publish this special issue in the year of the meeting. We also thank the local team in Munich, Eberhard Riedle and Axel Schenzle, for organizing a great conference. Last but not least, this special issue would have been impossible without the professional work of the editor-in-chief, Frank Träger, and his team, in particular Daniela Schiller, University of Kassel, and Friedhilde Meyer, Springer, Heidelberg.

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