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Front Matter: Volume 7746

, "Front Matter: Volume 7746," Proc. SPIE 7746, 17th Slovak-Czech-Polish Optical Conference on Wave and Quantum Aspects of Contemporary Optics, 774601 (10 January 2011); doi: 10.1117/12.886225

SPIE.

Event: 17th Slovak-Czech-Polish Optical Conference on Wave and Quantum Aspects of Contemporary Optics, 2010, Liptovsky Jan, Slovakia

PROCEEDINGS OF SPIE

17th Slovak-Czech-Polish Optical Conference on

Wave and Quantum Aspects of Contemporary Optics

Jarmila Müllerová
Dagmar Senderáková
Stanislav Jurečka
Editors

6–10 September 2010
Liptovský Ján, Slovakia

Organized by

Department of Engineering Fundamentals, University of Žilina (Slovakia)

Slovak Electrotechnical Society

Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics, Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia)

Sponsored by

The Czech and Slovak Society for Photonics

The Optical Society of the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic

Cooperating Organization and Publisher

SPIE

Volume 7746

Proceedings of SPIE, 0277-786X, v. 7746

SPIE is an international society advancing an interdisciplinary approach to the science and application of light.

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Author(s), "Title of Paper," in *17th Slovak-Czech-Polish Optical Conference on Wave and Quantum Aspects of Contemporary Optics*, edited by Jarmila Müllerová, Dagmar Senderáková, Stanislav Jurečka, Proceedings of SPIE Vol. 7746 (SPIE, Bellingham, WA, 2010) Article CID Number.

ISSN 0277-786X

ISBN 9780819482365

Published by

SPIE

P.O. Box 10, Bellingham, Washington 98227-0010 USA

Telephone +1 360 676 3290 (Pacific Time) · Fax +1 360 647 1445

SPIE.org

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Printed in the United States of America.

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Contents

xi	Conference Committee
xiii	Introduction

SESSION 1 INVITED LECTURES

7746 02	100 Gigabit Internet why and how: the technology behind it (Invited Paper) [7746-06] I. Glesk, Univ. of Strathclyde (United Kingdom)
7746 03	Photon-number resolving detectors (Invited Paper) [7746-56] O. Haderka, J. Peřina, Jr., M. Hamar, V. Michálek, A. Černoch, J. Soubusta, Joint Lab. of Optics, Palacký Univ. in Olomouc and Institute of Physics of the ASCR v.v.i. (Czech Republic)
7746 04	Utilization of selected laser-ablation-based diagnostic methods for study of elemental distribution in various solid samples (Invited Paper) [7746-10] J. Kaiser, Brno Univ. of Technology (Czech Republic); K. Novotný, A. Hrdlička, Masaryk Univ. (Czech Republic); R. Malina, J. Novotný, D. Prochazka, M. Petrilak, Brno Univ. of Technology (Czech Republic); L. Krajcarová, G. Vítková, P. Kučerová, Masaryk Univ. (Czech Republic)
7746 05	Transparency and super-resolution in metal-dielectric layered structures (Invited Paper) [7746-60] R. Kotyński, Univ. of Warsaw (Poland)
7746 06	Optical vortices: What they can do for us? (Invited Paper) [7746-43] J. Masajada, Wrocław Univ. of Technology (Poland)
7746 07	Pulsed-laser deposition and laser-induced breakdown spectroscopy of functional oxide materials (Invited Paper) [7746-12] J. D. Pedarnig, Johannes Kepler Univ. Linz (Austria)
7746 08	Advanced optical methods for patterning of photonic structures in photoresist, III-V semiconductors and PMMA (Invited Paper) [7746-30] D. Pudiš, L. Šušlik, I. Kubicová, Univ. of Žilina (Slovakia); J. Škriniarová, Slovak Univ. of Technology (Slovakia); I. Martinček, Univ. of Žilina (Slovakia)
7746 09	Nanometer scale imaging with table top extreme ultraviolet sources (Invited Paper) [7746-08] P. W. Wachulak, Military Univ. of Technology (Poland); R. L. Sandberg, Los Alamos National Lab. (United States); A. Isoyan, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison (United States); L. Urbanski, Colorado State Univ. (United States); A. Bartnik, Military Univ. of Technology (Poland); R. A. Bartels, C. S. Menoni, Colorado State Univ. (United States); H. Fiedorowicz, Military Univ. of Technology (Poland); J. J. Rocca, M. C. Marconi, Colorado State Univ. (United States)

SESSION 2 INTERFEROMETRY

- 7746 0A **The regular lattice of optical vortices used for measurement in two angular and one linear degree of freedom** [7746-32]
E. Frączyk, F. Rus, J. Mroczka, Wrocław Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 0B **The scanning method for measuring surface shape using the regular lattice of optical vortices** [7746-20]
E. Frączyk, J. Mroczka, Wrocław Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 0C **Optical vortices localization with artificial neural network** [7746-24]
W. Frączyk, T. Guskowski, Wrocław Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 0D **Measurement of dispersion characteristics of two-mode birefringent optical fibers by spectral interferometric techniques** [7746-02]
P. Hlubina, D. Ciprian, M. Kadulová, Technical Univ. of Ostrava (Czech Republic);
T. Martynkien, W. Urbańczyk, Wrocław Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 0E **Interferometry with direct compensation of fluctuations of refractive index of air** [7746-47]
J. Lazar, O. Číp, M. Čížek, J. Hrabina, Z. Buchta, Institute of Scientific Instruments of the ASCR, v.v.i. (Czech Republic)
- 7746 0F **Multiwavelength laser interferometry with semiconductor laser source** [7746-57]
B. Mikel, Z. Buchta, J. Lazar, O. Číp, Institute of Scientific Instruments of the ASCR, v.v.i. (Czech Republic)
- 7746 0G **Continuous wavelet transform analysis and visualization of additive type moiré and time-average fringe patterns** [7746-22]
K. Pokorski, K. Patorski, Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 0H **The image quality and resolution limits of phase-shifting digital holography based on the self-imaging effect** [7746-38]
A. Siemion, I. Ducin, K. Kakarenko, M. Makowski, A. Siemion, J. Suszek, M. Sypek,
D. Wojnowski, A. Kocodziejczyk, Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 0I **Monitor of mirror distance of Fabry-Perot cavity by the use of stabilized femtosecond laser comb** [7746-48]
R. Šmíd, J. Ježek, Z. Buchta, M. Čížek, B. Mikel, J. Lazar, O. Číp, Institute of Scientific Instruments of the ASCR, v.v.i. (Czech Republic)
- 7746 0J **Application of the S-transform to the phase-shift extraction in phase shifting interferometry** [7746-76]
B. Zielinski, K. Patorski, Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 0K **Dynamical deformation compensation of phase in digital holographic microscopy** [7746-64]
T. Zikmund, L. Kvasnica, H. Uhlířová, L. Lovicar, R. Chmelík, Brno Univ. of Technology (Czech Republic)

SESSION 3 DIFFRACTIVE OPTICS

- 7746 OL **Holographic color projection with additional phase factor to suppress zero diffractive order** [7746-36]
I. Ducin, K. Kakarenko, M. Makowski, A. Siemion, A. Siemion, J. Suszek, M. Sypek,
D. Wojnowski, A. Kołodziejczyk, Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 OM **Computer simulation of the speckle field propagation** [7746-23]
I. Hamarová, P. Horváth, P. Šmíd, M. Hrabovský, Joint Lab. of Optics, Palacký Univ. in
Olomouc and Institute of Physics of the ASCR v.v.i. (Czech Republic)
- 7746 ON **Modelling of the space invariant optical systems with a spatially incoherent illumination**
[7746-40]
K. Kakarenko, I. Ducin, M. Makowski, A. Siemion, A. Siemion, J. Suszek, M. Sypek,
D. Wojnowski, A. Kołodziejczyk, Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 OO **3D imaging with the light sword optical element and deconvolution of distance-dependent
point spread functions** [7746-35]
M. Makowski, K. Petelczyc, A. Kołodziejczyk, Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland);
Z. Jaroszewicz, Institute of Applied Optics (Poland); I. Ducin, K. Kakarenko, A. Siemion,
A. Siemion, J. Suszek, M. Sypek, D. Wojnowski, Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 OP **Design, realization, and applications of diffractive structures for laser beam manipulation**
[7746-66]
M. Škereň, P. Fiala, M. Květoň, M. Nývlt, Czech Technical Univ. in Prague (Czech Republic)
- 7746 OQ **Realization of spatial image using diffractive structures** [7746-58]
J. Svoboda, D. Najdek, P. Fiala, Czech Technical Univ. in Prague (Czech Republic)

SESSION 4 LIGHT-MATTER INTERACTIONS

- 7746 OR **Analysis of the Faraday and the Cotton-Mouton effects interaction in a tokamak plasma**
[7746-75]
B. Bieg, Maritime Univ. of Szczecin (Poland)
- 7746 OS **Interaction of Cotton-Mouton and Faraday effect under different initial polarization state of
incident beam** [7746-46]
J. Chrzanowski, Maritime Univ. of Szczecin (Poland); Yu. A. Kravtsov, Maritime Univ. of
Szczecin (Poland) and Space Research Institute (Russian Federation)
- 7746 OT **Correlations in far field of photons emitted by parametric fluorescence** [7746-27]
M. Hamar, J. Peřina, O. Haderka, V. Michálek, A. Černoch, J. Soubusta, Joint Lab. of Optics,
Palacký Univ. in Olomouc and Institute of Physics of the ASCR v.v.i. (Czech Republic)
- 7746 OU **Interaction of the narrow and the wide solitons in generalized saturable Kerr-type** [7746-61]
J. Jasiński, Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 OV **Absorptive optical bistability in organic media under the influence of transverse effects**
[7746-80]
E. Jurisová, J. Müllerová, Univ. of Žilina (Slovakia)

- 7746 0W **Photoelectron spectra for an atom with one autoionizing level that interacts with a neighbor** [7746-41]
A. Lukš, V. Peřinová, J. Peřina, Jr., J. Křepelka, Joint Lab. of Optics, Palacký Univ. in Olomouc and Institute of Physics of the ASCR v.v.i. (Czech Republic); W. Leonski, Univ. of Zielona Góra (Poland)
- 7746 0X **Raman spectroscopy for the characterization of algal cells** [7746-65]
O. Samek, A. Jonáš, Z. Pilát, P. Zemánek, Institute of Scientific Instruments of the ASCR, v.v.i. (Czech Republic); L. Nedbal, J. Tříška, P. Kotas, Institute of Systems Biology and Ecology of the ASCR, v.v.i. (Czech Republic); M. Trřílek, Photon Systems Instruments (Czech Republic)
- 7746 0Y **Analysis of coupled equation scheme for modelling of nonlinear pulse propagation in coupled microring resonators** [7746-51]
A. Šterkhova, J. Luksch, J. Petrřáček, Brno Univ. of Technology (Czech Republic)

SESSION 5 PHOTONIC DEVICES

- 7746 0Z **Performance of SNOM probes with one groove at core-cladding interface** [7746-81]
T. J. Antosiewicz, P. Wróbel, T. Szoplik, Univ. of Warsaw (Poland)
- 7746 10 **High-contrast all-glass volumetric photonic crystal** [7746-85]
A. Filipkowski, Institute of Electronic Materials Technology (Poland); G. van Caloen, Vrije Univ. Brussel (Belgium); R. Buczynski, Institute of Electronic Materials Technology (Poland) and Univ. of Warsaw (Poland); I. Kujawa, D. Pysz, Institute of Electronic Materials Technology (Poland); N. Vermeulen, H. Thienpont, Vrije Univ. Brussel (Belgium); R. Stepień, Institute of Electronic Materials Technology (Poland)
- 7746 11 **Supercontinuum generation in dual core photonic crystal fiber** [7746-82]
M. Koys, Comenius Univ. in Bratislava (Slovakia); I. Bugar, Comenius Univ. in Bratislava (Slovakia) and International Laser Ctr. (Slovakia); V. Mesáros, Comenius Univ. in Bratislava (Slovakia); F. Uherek, International Laser Ctr. (Slovakia); R. Buczynski, Institute of Electronic Materials Technology (Poland)
- 7746 12 **Metamaterial nanotips with multi-frequency local field enhancement** [7746-83]
J. Pniewski, Univ. of Warsaw (Poland); S. Mühlig, C. Rockstuhl, Friedrich-Schiller-Univ. Jena (Germany); C. Simovski, Helsinki Univ. of Technology (Finland)
- 7746 13 **Sub-wavelength imaging using silver-dielectric metamaterial layered prism** [7746-84]
M. Stolarek, A. Pastuszcak, J. Pniewski, R. Kotyński, Univ. of Warsaw (Poland)

SESSION 6 OPTICAL STRUCTURES

- 7746 14 **Surface plasmons on nanostructured metal-dielectric surfaces** [7746-13]
J. Čtyroký, Institute of Photonics and Electronics of the ASCR, v.v.i. (Czech Republic)
- 7746 15 **Study of microstructural and optical properties of α -Si:H thin films** [7746-07]
S. Jurečka, J. Müllerová, Univ. of Žilina (Slovakia)

- 7746 16 **Structures patterning by non-contact NSOM lithography** [7746-34]
I. Kubicová, D. Pudiš, L. Šušlik, Univ. of Žilina (Slovakia); J. Škriniarová, Slovak Univ. of Technology (Slovakia); S. Slabeyciusová, I. Martinček, Univ. of Žilina (Slovakia)
- 7746 17 **Far-infrared spectroscopy of terbium-scandium-aluminium garnet and terbium-scandium perovskite** [7746-49]
Z. Mrázková, D. Hrabovský, K. Postava, J. Pištora, Technical Univ. of Ostrava (Czech Republic); S. Turczynski, K. Kolodziejak, D. A. Pawlak, Institute of Electronic Materials Technology (Poland)
- 7746 18 **Single mode PCF made of soft glass** [7746-17]
D. Pysz, A. Filipkowski, R. Stepień, Institute of Electronic Materials Technology (Poland); R. Buczyński, Institute of Electronic Materials Technology (Poland) and Univ. Warsaw (Poland); I. Kujawa, Institute of Electronic Materials Technology (Poland); S. Ertman, Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 19 **Nonlinear soft oxide glasses for microstructured optical fibers development** [7746-18]
R. Stepień, Institute of Electronic Materials Technology (Poland); R. Buczynski, Institute of Electronic Materials Technology (Poland) and Univ. of Warsaw (Poland); D. Pysz, I. Kujawa, A. Filipkowski, M. Mirkowska, Institute of Electronic Materials Technology (Poland)
- 7746 1A **The role of bending in influencing the transfer function of photonic crystal fibers** [7746-29]
P. Tvarožek, D. Káčik, P. Tatár, Univ. of Žilina (Slovakia)
- 7746 1B **Plasmonic nanolenses made of noble metals focusing into far-field** [7746-86]
P. Wróbel, T. J. Antosiewicz, T. Szoplik, Univ. of Warsaw (Poland)

SESSION 7 MEASUREMENTS AND APPLICATIONS

- 7746 1C **Flexible dual-beam geometry for advanced optical micromanipulation experiments** [7746-59]
O. Brzobohatý, Institute of Scientific Instruments of the ASCR, v.v.i. (Czech Republic); T. Čižmár, K. Dholakia, Univ. of St. Andrews (United Kingdom); P. Zemánek, Institute of Scientific Instruments of the ASCR, v.v.i. (Czech Republic)
- 7746 1D **Surface diagnostics using low-coherence interferometry and colour single CCD camera** [7746-55]
Z. Buchta, B. Mikel, J. Lazar, O. Číp, Institute of Scientific Instruments of the ASCR, v.v.i. (Czech Republic)
- 7746 1E **Investigation of gradient structures prepared by laser ablation method** [7746-50]
J. Ciosek, B. Budner, S. Burdyska, M. Jedynski, Military Univ. of Technology (Poland); R. Minikayev, Institute of Physics (Poland); A. Prokopiuk, W. Mróz, Military Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 1F **Performance analysis of imaging Stokes polarimeter based on liquid crystal modulators** [7746-16]
S. Drobczyński, P. Kurzynowski, W. A. Woźniak, Wrocław Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 1G **Active infrared thermography as a method for non-destructive testing** [7746-26]
M. Hain, J. Bartl, Institute of Measurement Science, Slovak Academy of Sciences (Slovakia)

- 7746 1H **Spectral ellipsometry based on a channeled spectrum detection to measure the thickness of a thin film** [7746-03]
P. Hlubina, D. Ciprian, J. Luňáček, Technical Univ. of Ostrava (Czech Republic)
- 7746 1I **Laser source for interferometry in nanotechnology** [7746-62]
J. Hrabina, J. Lazar, O. Cip, M. Cizek, Institute of Scientific Instruments of the ASCR, v.v.i. (Czech Republic)
- 7746 1J **Utilization of an LCoS spatial light modulator's phase flicker for improving diffractive efficiency** [7746-39]
K. Kakarenko, M. Zaremba, I. Ducin, M. Makowski, A. Siemion, A. Siemion, J. Suszek, M. Sypek, D. Wojnowski, Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland); Z. Jaroszewicz, Institute of Applied Optics (Poland); A. Kołodziejczyk, Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 1K **Amplitude filters in reconstructing the shape of microlenses** [7746-45]
R. Kasztelanic, Univ. of Warsaw (Poland)
- 7746 1L **Technical boroscope: the device for combustion processes monitoring** [7746-52]
J. Kepřt, L. Pospíšil, Joint Lab. of Optics, Palacký Univ. in Olomouc and Institute of Physics of the ASCR v.v.i. (Czech Republic); L. Bartonek, Palacký Univ. in Olomouc (Czech Republic)
- 7746 1M **Interactive matrix method for analysis and construction of optical systems with elaborated components** [7746-28]
T. Kryszczyński, J. Mikucki, Institute of Applied Optics (Poland)
- 7746 1N **Diffuse light imaging with a coherence controlled holographic microscope** [7746-67]
M. Lošťák, P. Kolman, Z. Dostál, R. Chmelík, Brno Univ. of Technology (Czech Republic)
- 7746 1O **Tomography reconstruction of geometry and refractive index profile of highly asymmetric optical fiber preforms** [7746-44]
A. Novozámský, Institute of Photonics and Electronics of the ASCR, v.v.i. (Czech Republic) and Czech Technical Univ. in Prague (Czech Republic); J. Slánička, P. Peterka, Institute of Photonics and Electronics of the ASCR, v.v.i. (Czech Republic)
- 7746 1P **Photonics: how to get familiar with it** [7746-77]
D. Senderakova, V. Mesáros, A. Strba, Comenius Univ. in Bratislava (Slovakia)
- 7746 1Q **Speckless head-up display on two spatial light modulators** [7746-37]
A. Siemion, I. Ducin, K. Kakarenko, M. Makowski, A. Siemion, J. Suszek, M. Sypek, D. Wojnowski, Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland); Z. Jaroszewicz, Institute of Applied Optics (Poland); A. Kołodziejczyk, Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland)
- 7746 1R **Coherence-controlled holographic microscope** [7746-54]
T. Slabý, M. Antoř, Z. Dostál, P. Kolman, R. Chmelík, Brno Univ. of Technology (Czech Republic)

SESSION 8 OPTICAL INFORMATION PROCESSING

- 7746 1S **Optical data storage for high-speed data processing and archiving** [7746-11]
M. Boldis, Slovak Technical Univ. (Slovakia); F. Uherek, Slovak Technical Univ. (Slovakia) and International Laser Ctr. (Slovakia); J. Chovan, International Laser Ctr. (Slovakia)

- 7746 1T **Simulation of optical networks using distributed computing with feedback** [7746-74]
J. Dubovan, M. Kuba, M. Markovič, M. Dado, Univ. of Žilina (Slovakia)
- 7746 1U **Reservation protocols for signalisation in optical networks** [7746-79]
M. Dulik, Univ. of Žilina (Slovakia)
- 7746 1V **Optimization of all-optical wavelength converter based on conversion of cross-phase modulation in fiber Bragg grating** [7746-42]
P. Honzatko, Institute of Photonics and Electronics of the ASCR, v.v.i. (Czech Republic)
- 7746 1W **Optical signal processing of interference fringes by Hartley transform method** [7746-04]
H. Kaya, Z. Saraç, M. Özer, H. Taşkın, Zonguldak Karaelmas Univ. (Turkey)
- 7746 1X **On the influence of optical accuracy of the band-pass thin-film filter design for coexistence-type colorless WDM-PON** [7746-05]
D. Korček, Alcatel-Lucent Slovakia (Slovakia); J. Müllerová, Univ. of Žilina (Slovakia)
- 7746 1Y **Segment time analysis of Segment-based Robust Fast Optical Reservation Protocol (S-RFORP)** [7746-73]
M. Markovič, J. Dubovan, M. Dado, Univ. of Žilina (Slovakia)
- 7746 1Z **Ultrafast all-optical temporal differentiation in integrated phase-shifted Bragg gratings** [7746-09]
K. A. Rutkowska, INRS-EMT, Univ. du Québec (Canada) and Warsaw Univ. of Technology (Poland); D. Duchesne, INRS-EMT, Univ. du Québec (Canada); M. J. Strain, Univ. of Glasgow (United Kingdom); J. Azaña, R. Morandotti, INRS-EMT, Univ. du Québec (Canada); M. Sorel, Univ. of Glasgow (United Kingdom)
- 7746 20 **Numerical refocusing of planar samples unlimited** [7746-68]
M. Týč, R. Chmelík, Brno Univ. of Technology (Czech Republic)
- 7746 21 **Measurement of optical beam for free space optical link** [7746-21]
O. Wilfert, L. Dordova, Brno Univ. of Technology (Czech Republic)

Author Index

Conference Committee

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Introduction

The 17th Slovak-Czech-Polish Optical Conference (17th SCPOC) was held 6–10 September 2010 in the SOREA Máj Hotel in Liptovský Ján, located in the Janska Dolina Valley, one of the most beautiful valleys in the Low Tatras National Park in Slovakia. The conference was a continuation of a series of regular meetings of Slovak, Czech, and Polish optical communities started in 1972 in Rusava, Czech Republic. After a short interruption between the 1980s and 1990s, the meetings have grown to conferences under the name 'Wave and Quantum Aspects of Contemporary Optics.'

For more than 30 years, the conference has been organized biannually in turn in Czechoslovakia and Poland and since 1996 in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland. It has become a place to exchange knowledge on the latest optical research, to meet friends and co-workers, including young scientists.

The 17th SCPOC was organized by the Department of Engineering Fundamentals, the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, University of Žilina, Slovakia; the Slovak Electrotechnical Society; and by the Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics, Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, and in cooperation with SPIE.

In 1996, at the conference in Karpacz, Poland, due to the initiative of the Polish Chapter of SPIE, the agreement with SPIE to publish conference contributions in the Proceedings of SPIE was signed. Since then, selected conference papers have been published in the Proceedings of SPIE. SPIE agreed to serve as the Cooperating Organization for 17th SCPOC as well as publish conference papers online as part of the SPIE Digital Library. Additionally, SPIE supported student participation in the conference and acknowledged excellence in student research by the Student Best Paper Awards.

The 17th SCPOC was also supported by both the Czech and Slovak Society of Photonics, and the Optical Society of the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic, the follower of former SPIE/CS Chapter.

One of the most important aims of scientific conferences is to encourage and promote international collaboration and cooperation. Therefore it was great pleasure for the 17th Slovak-Czech-Polish Optical Conference to host - the first time in its history - the Workshop of the COST Action MP0702 Towards Functional Sub-Wavelength Photonic Structures, Working Group 1 Plasmonics, Metamaterials and Non-reciprocity.

The conference attracted 126 participants, among them: 48 from the Czech Republic, 45 from Poland, 24 from Slovakia, and 9 from other countries (France 1;

Canada 1; Austria 1; United Kingdom 2; Turkey 3). The scientific programme comprised 20 invited papers, 45 oral presentations and 46 poster presentations. The contributions covered generally all aspects of optics, e.g., quantum and nonlinear optics, quantum information and cryptography, ultrafast optical phenomena, wave optics, interferometry and holography, optical technologies for optical communications and networks, waveguide and optoelectronics devices, laser physics, technology, photonic crystals, photonic nanostructures and integrated optics, biophotonics, design and manufacture of optical components and optical devices, optical materials, fabrication and characterization, optical data storage and data processing, teaching and training in optics, optical imaging, sensing and metrology, etc.

This volume contains 72 peer-reviewed submitted contributions based on presentations given at the conference. The first eight papers present scientific content of invited lectures in the current fields of quantum optics, plasmonics, laser-induced plasma and laser-ablation diagnostics, sub-wavelength photonic structures, ultra-fast optical communication technologies and optical trapping. Also, the volume contains papers of the first three SPIE Student Best Paper Awards winners, K. Pokorski (PL), B. Zielinski (PL) and I. Kubicova (SK).

When compared to similar world optical conferences, the International Scientific Board rated highly the scientific level of the 17th SCPOC. In particular, the presence of many young participants was greatly appreciated. This, in a way, guarantees the future of common optical conferences, connecting optical communities especially from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland, but not only. The 18th Slovak-Czech-Polish Optical Conference on Wave and Quantum Aspects of Contemporary Optics will be held in the Czech Republic in 2012.

Concluding, we would like to express our thanks to the members of the International Scientific Board and to the session chairs. We also would like to express our gratitude to the Organizing and Cooperating Organizations and to the Local Organizing Committee for their attitude and diligent work behind the scenes: resulting in great conference facilities.

The conference is still characterised by a special pleasant atmosphere. The participants themselves had created this atmosphere above all. We would like to express our gratitude to each of them for their individual scientific and human contributions in exchanging ideas and experience, and for keeping a warm spirit of friendship and mutual understanding.

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