

Foreword

We are now pleased to finally present as a special volume of *Scientia Marina* some selected contributions to the 8th International Symposium on Oceanography of the Bay of Biscay held at Xixón-Gijón, Asturias, Spain on April 11-13, 2002. In what was more like an endurance test for the authors than a normal publication process, we first offered them the possibility of publishing their papers in *Oceanologica Acta*, but the efforts at re-launching the journal proved to be unsuccessful. Fortunately, *Scientia Marina* agreed to pick up the baton. Its interdisciplinary nature made it highly suitable due to the broad scope of oceanographic research covered by this Symposium.

Regional partitions of the ocean have been a fruitful approach for what is otherwise a system with no real bounds. The Symposium focusing on *our regional* Atlantic Ocean started twenty years ago at the University of Uviéu-Oviedo as a modest seminar with the aim of gathering together for the first time researchers from the different coasts of the Bay of Biscay. This informal meeting with a handful of enthusiastic young researchers has gone a long distance from Uviéu to Vigo, where it is scheduled this year, calling at Donostia, Arcachon, Santander, La Rochelle, Donostia, Biarritz, Xixón-Gijón and Pau. Every two years researchers coming mostly from countries facing the Bay of Biscay have regularly responded to the call of what is now a consolidated scientific meeting. Marine scientists meet with the aim of advancing our knowledge of every aspect of the oceanography of this north Atlantic sub-basin, a marine area that is especially important for Europe from a socio-economic point of view. In 2002, more than 180 participants from Spain and France, and also from other places such as Portugal, the United Kingdom and Germany, presented a total of 140 contributions, equally divided between oral communications and posters, in the already traditional sessions on Circulation and Transport, Geology and Sedimentation, Chemistry and Pollutants, Plankton and Nutrients, and Fisheries and Environmental Conditions.

This volume itself has been a truly multidisciplinary oceanographic project because it includes papers on geology, paleoceanography, physical oceanography, planktonic, benthic and fisheries biology and ecology, and hydrographic and fisheries modelling. The manuscripts were peer-reviewed by more than 40 international referees to whom we are deeply indebted. Without their efforts and the continuous support of the Editorial Board of *Scientia Marina*, this volume would not have been produced. Finally, in spite of all the delays suffered in the publication process we are very pleased to see that this nicely edited volume coincides with the 10th edition of the Symposium, *Colloque* or *Coloquio*, as it is already familiarly known by the community of marine scientists working in the Bay of Biscay.

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