

Dear Participants of ChemCH 2018,

“Our cultural and natural heritage is an irreplaceable source of life and inspiration. It is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations.” (UK National Commission for UNESCO) It is therefore vital that cultural heritage should not be left to decay, deteriorate or even be destructed. Cultural heritage is, however, a very large and complex issue, constantly changing and chemistry has a multi-faceted rôle in its safeguarding, chemists being called to contribute to solving the challenges that face heritage today. The aim of the biennial congress ChemCH is to look to the future of an united Europe from the point of view of its Cultural Heritage. With this aspiration, during the fifth congress ChemCH 2018, we will search for ways to preserve and celebrate our collective Cultural Heritage in the spirit of the European Year of Cultural Heritage: **"Our Heritage: Where the Past Meets the Future"**.

It is therefore a great honour and pleasure for us to host the ChemCH 2018 edition in Romania, a crossroad of cultures at the gates of the Orient. Standing at the confluence of the East and the West, being the sole Christian Orthodox nation among the Latin peoples, the sole Latin people in the Orthodox East and a cultural “melting pot” in itself, Romania boasts a cultural heritage that carries a valuable historical legacy. This year, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Great Union of the Romanians. After 100 years we wonder at the advances especially made since 1945 through European integration. Such a progress cannot be taken for granted and we should deeply reflect on what kind of Europe we want. It is worth remembering that the Council of Europe was the first post-war international organization to use the term of cultural heritage in an official document. European cultural heritage was the pivotal concept of its 1954 Cultural Convention. The awareness of the importance of conservation was certainly stimulated by the urge to rebuild after the chaos and devastation of the two world wars. Thus, preservation of heritage assets exceeded the narrow boundaries of museographic tradition, becoming a living proof of a new European cultural policy, a sign of vitality and aspiration to build up a united Europe.

It is within this context that, on behalf of the Local Organising Committee, we welcome all ChemCH members and guests at ChemCH 2018 in Bucharest, once known as the Little Paris of the East, now a modern city developing at a tremendous rate. Based on more than 120 abstracts submitted to this congress, an exciting scientific programme with invited lectures, oral and poster presentations has been organised with the valuable support of the members of the International Board of ChemCH and the Scientific Committee.

Thanks to the substantial support of national and local institutions, cultural institutions and many private persons a rich cultural and social programme to foster interaction, mutual knowledge and building new relationships has been organised.

We are grateful for the Patronage and financial support of the Romanian Ministry of Research and Innovation.

We want to express our gratitude to the main co-organiser of ChemCH 2018, the National Museum of Romanian Literature – through Bucharest City Hall, and to our main partner, PROUD TO BE ROMANIAN, for the unmatched enthusiasm and dedication to make ChemCH 2018 a successful event.

We also wish to sincerely thank all collaborators for actively supporting our meeting.

Dr. Elena Badea, Chair of the ChemCH 2018