

Editorial for the Virtual Special Issue on CompTest2017

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The 8th International Conference on Composite Testing and Model Identification was organised by the Composite Materials Group at KU Leuven. From the 5th to the 7th of April 2017, leading scientists from all over the world came to Leuven (Belgium) for CompTest2017. Previous CompTest conferences were held in Châlons-en-Champagne (France) in 2003, Bristol (UK) in 2004, Porto (Portugal) in 2006, Dayton (USA) in 2008, Lausanne (Switzerland) in 2011, Aalborg (Denmark) in 2013 and Madrid (Spain) in 2015. In line with the rich history of the conference, the goals of the conference were (1) to stimulate interactions between simulations and experiments and (2) to put forward new and further develop existing experimental characterisation techniques.

The relevance and importance of these topics became abundantly clear when the abstracts started flowing in. In the end, we had 47 oral presentations and 51 poster presentations, complemented by 3 keynote lectures. We had a total of 146 delegates from 24 different countries.

The conference was opened by the keynote presentation of John Botsis (EPFL) on thin ply composites. On the second day, we started with the keynote of Fabrice Pierron (University of Southampton) on high strain rate testing of composites. The third day was kicked off by Makoto Endo (Toray Industries) on recent developments in carbon fibre and its composites. The conference was closed by a special lecture by Steve Tsai via videoconference. The format of the mini-orals to attract more attention to posters was very much appreciated by the attendees. At the end of the conference, we presented two awards for PhD students. The best oral presentation award was given to Gianmaria Bullegas from Imperial College London, whereas the best poster award was given to Jeppe Jørgensen (LM Windpower).

Apart from the excellent technical presentations, there was ample opportunity for networking during the coffee breaks and lunches. Most attendees will forever remember the welcome reception, where they had the opportunity to taste 26 different Belgian beers. The consortium dinner was held in the Faculty Club located on the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Great Beguinage of Leuven.

A selection of CompTest authors were invited to submit a full journal paper to a virtual special issue in *Composites Part A: Applied Science and Manufacturing*. Nine articles have so far been accepted and published within this special issue.

CompTest2017 would not have been possible without the extensive help of the members of our research group. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Arsen Melnikov, Bart Buffel, Chen Ling, Christian Breite, Delphine Depuydt, Fatih Oz, Ilya Straumit, Jun Tang, Kevin Hendrickx, Kathleen Vallons, Luca Martulli, Nghi Nguyen, Nikolay Petrov, Mahoor Mehdikhani, Man Zhu, Marina Selezneva, Morissa Lu, Oksana Shishkina, Qiang Liu, Rafael Santos, Seethalakshmi Chandramouli, Steven Latré, Wim Six for their generous help. We would also like to thank our departmental assistants (Kevin Agten, Huberte Cloosen, Mia Pierre, Nadine Thuir and Mieke Van Audenhoven) for their wonderful help on the administrative side, and our sponsors (Toray Industries, Shimadzu, Limess, GOM, Siemens, Moss Composites, MAI Carbon and ESCM) for enriching the conference with their exhibits and contributions to its organisational costs. The International Scientific Committee actively helped to shape the conference and to review the

abstracts. We would therefore like to thank them as well as our vice chairs Michael Wisnom and Fabrice Pierron for their contributions.

The [next CompTest](#) will be organised by Luleå University of Technology from the 27th to 29th of May 2019. We have no doubt that the team of Janis Varna, Roberts Joffe, Liva Pupure and Lennart Wallström will do an excellent job in organising the next CompTest conference. We hope to see many of you there!