The Optics of liquid crystals – 2017 (OLC2017) was held at Hotel & Spa Casa Grande, in Guarujá, state of São Paulo, Brazil, from 24 to 29 September 2017. It was attended by 63 researchers from different countries, namely Brazil, the United States of America, England, Chile, Portugal, Mexico, Poland, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Russia, India and the Ukraine.

In the early evening of the 24th, we held a ‘welcome’ meeting for the participants and, in the following morning, the scientific programme was started. We had 14 invited talks, 44 oral communications, about 10 posters and two tutorials. The invited, oral and poster presentations were of excellent standard, as attested by the comments of numerous participants. The programme of the event was quite dense, and there were no last-minute cancellations; all the scheduled participants came to the conference.

Some highlights could be pointed out, in particular the lectures by Prof. Maria Helena Godinho, from Lisbon. She presented her latest results involving cellulose and elastomeric materials. She showed both the physical–chemical aspects present in the research with these materials, as well as their technological applications and relationships observed for patterns in nature (as in insects, animals and plants). The tutorial given by her was excellent, providing a broad view of the research area, which motivated the students present.

The lectures, including the tutorial, by Prof. Chigrinov, focused essentially on photoalignment of molecules with liquid crystalline properties on substrates. This topic has a great appeal regarding the technological area of new devices using materials in the liquid crystalline phase. Devices have been introduced that may soon replace the usual (cellulose based) paper. For such devices the user can write, read and then, if wanted, delete the content and rewrite on the device thousands of times without losing the quality of writing display. The device is malleable and should be on the market in a few years.

Besides a rather tight presentation schedule, participants had the opportunity to discuss in a casual environment (Figure 1). This atmosphere was surely helped by the white beaches and palm trees adjacent to the conference venue and the coffee breaks.

Advances in theories describing the behaviour of materials in the liquid crystalline phase were presented. Both thermotropic and lyotropic liquid crystals have been addressed. An important aspect of OLC2017 was the presence of students from both Brazil and abroad (about 20). This point was considered to be essential by the international board responsible for the OLCs. Prof. Oleg Lavrentovich was appointed as new chair of the international board of the OLCs (Figure 2).

The Proceedings of the OLC2017 will be published in the journal Molecular Crystals and Liquid Crystals by Taylor & Francis. The support of the Brazilian financial agencies, FAPESP, CNPq, CAPES, USP, the Brazilian
Physical Society and the Brazilian Association of Crystallography was essential for the success of this conference. Alphamicron and Taylor & Francis are also acknowledged for the financial support. At last it should be noticed that despite the many presentations and scientific discussions, the typical liveliness of the Brazilian social programme was much appreciated by the attendees (Figure 3).

**Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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*Chair of the OLC2017*

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**Figure 2.** Professor Oleg Lavrentovich, from the liquid crystal institute, Kent, OH, USA, was appointed as the new chair of the OLC international board.

**Figure 3.** A typical Brazilian carnival-like atmosphere was felt at the dance presentation during the social programme of the conference.