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PREFACE TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE IN HONOR OF BRANKO MATOVIĆ

Jelena ZAGORAC[1,2], Ivana CVIJOVIĆ-ALAGIĆ[1,2], Vesna MAKSIMOVIĆ[1,2], Dejan ZAGORAC[1,2*],

[1] Institute of Nuclear Sciences "Vinča", University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
[2] Center of Excellence "CextremeLab", Center for synthesis, processing, and characterization of materials for application in extreme conditions, Belgrade, Serbia
Corresponding authors: dzagorac@vinca.rs*

[$] Dedicated to Branko Matović on the occasion of his 67th birthday

It is an honor to introduce this special volume of Journal of Innovative Materials in Extreme Conditions, dedicated to Branko Matović on his 67th birthday. As long-standing professional colleagues and personal friends, we can attest to Branko's exceptional impact on our shared fields, establishing him as a leading scientist.

Branko Matović is a Professor and Research Advisor at the Vinča Institute of Nuclear Sciences, University of Belgrade, Serbia. He established the The Centre of Excellence „Center for Synthesis, Processing and Characterization of Materials for Application in Extreme Conditions" (CEXTREME LAB) in 2015 and served as its Head until 2025.

He received his B.Sc. in Mineralogy and Crystallography from the Faculty of Mining and Geology at the University of Belgrade. He obtained his Ph.D. in 2003 in structural non-oxide ceramics. His doctoral research was carried out at the Max Planck Institute for Metals Research in Stuttgart, Germany. He has been employed at the Vinča Institute since 1998 and was appointed Research Advisor in 2010.

His research interests include advanced ceramics, ultra-high-temperature ceramics, high-entropy materials, nanostructured oxide powders, solid solutions for energy applications, non-oxide ceramic synthesis, sintering mechanisms, phase transformations, phase equilibria, and materials processing under extreme temperature and pressure conditions.

Prof. Matović has supervised 14 Ph.D. dissertations and has held visiting professorships at Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan, and the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, India. He has authored more than 280 papers in SCI-indexed journals and 7 book chapters. According to Scopus [1], his publications have received more than 4,500 citations excluding self-citations, with an *h*-index of 37. His papers have been cited more than 200 times in highly ranked journals, and 184 of his publications have received at least 10 citations.

He has coordinated 4 national and 12 international research projects, delivered more than 30 invited lectures at international conferences, and holds 6 patents. His contributions include the

development of ultra-high-temperature ceramics and the introduction of high-entropy materials research in Serbia.

Prof. Matović is an Associate Member of the Academy of Engineering Sciences of Serbia, President of the Scientific Society for Ceramic Materials in Serbia, President of the Society for Innovative Materials in Extreme Conditions, and Editor-in-Chief of the international journal *Journal of Innovative Materials in Extreme Conditions*. [2] These efforts have fostered an extensive network of collaborations that continue to benefit our scientific community. Furthermore, Branko has contributed significantly to the Journal of Innovative Materials in Extreme Conditions since its inception, and we invite readers to learn more about his background and achievements. [2-8]

This special issue presents contributions by our esteemed colleagues and collaborators on topics in and around materials research under extreme conditions across various chemical systems – a subject matter that is dearer to Branko's research interests, having grown and evolved over the years. We express our gratitude for the papers contributed to this collection and thank the authors, reviewers, and JIMEC's editorial and technical staff for making this honorary special issue possible.

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