Foreword

This issue of the *Bulletin* contains articles by the invited speakers of the "2004 Han-sur-Lesse Meeting" on functional analysis and partial differential equations.

Organising meetings on functional analysis and partial differential equations is a long-standing tradition at the Mathematics Department of the University, in Liège. H.-G. Garnir initiated it in the 1960's. Apart from some international conferences, short meetings of two days usually, known as the "Esneux" or "Han-sur-Lesse" meetings were organised on approximately a yearly basis.

In 1979, H.-G. Garnir suggested that J. Schmets and R. Delanghe organise those meetings with him. Since then, J. Schmets has been organiser or coorganiser of 25 such short meetings, the list of which appears below.

The leading idea is to bring together 30 to 35 participants for 6 or 7 talks by renowned speakers or promising young mathematicians on topics of their own choice most often. Actually, several functional analysts delivered their first international talk in Esneux or in Han-sur-Lesse.

The short two-day meetings start with a lunch followed by talks in the afternoon, walking discussions after supper and long discussions in the evening or at night. The next day starts with talks in the morning and ends with a farewell shake-hand after lunch. This allows staying away just one night and yet offers the possibility to meet colleagues and achieve hard work. Apparently several participants like this organisation: they keep coming back year after year.

Such meetings require financial support. It is a real pleasure to thank the *Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique* (FNRS): through its *Groupe de Contact "Analyse fonctionnelle"*, it has constantly contributed to make our meetings successful.

Finding that 25 is a nice number and that it is good to let the organisation to younger colleagues, J. Schmets decided to step down. It does not mean the end of the existence of those short meetings. F. Bastin, coorganiser since 1996, will keep up with the tradition.

The 25th meeting was the opportunity to ask the speakers to submit a manuscript. They have all been refereed and the *Société Royale des Sciences de Liège* is honoured to publish them in this issue of its *Bulletin*.

On behalf of the *Société*, its Secretary General is happy to congratulate J. Schmets for his constant efforts in internationally promoting the Liège school of functional analysis and to thank him for the rich double issue of this Bulletin that many of you will read with, he is sure, growing interest.

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Jacques Aghion
Secretary General