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► **To cite this version:**

Michel Mitov. Report on the 17 th European conference on liquid crystals (ECLC 2025). 2025, pp.1-3. <10.1080/1358314X.2025.2558370>. <hal-05293234>

HAL Id: hal-05293234

<https://hal.science/hal-05293234v1>

Submitted on 1 Oct 2025

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Report on the 17th European conference on liquid crystals (ECLC 2025)

The saga of liquid crystal research began in 1888 when Friedrich Reinitzer, a botanist working at the Institute of Plant Physiology in Prague, lent credence to the unusual colour changes of crystals extracted from carrots that were subjected to a temperature cycle. In 2025, liquid crystals returned to their roots for the 17th European conference, which brought together 200 senior and junior researchers from 30 countries.

The conference highlighted the vitality of liquid crystal research and its growing importance in academic and practical applications. The program included four plenary lectures. Maria H. Godinho (NOVA University Lisbon, Portugal) (Figure 1(a)) opened the event with a presentation on cellulose and chitin liquid crystalline phases that emphasised sustainable and bio-derived mesophases. Ivan. I. Smalyukh (University of Colorado Boulder, USA) (Figure 1(b)) presented on nanocellulose-based aerogels for smart window applications, combining photonics with green materials science. Damian Pocięcha (University of Warsaw, Poland) (Figure 1(c)) introduced novel strategies for symmetry breaking in polar and smectic phases. Kristiaan Neyts (SKL of Advanced Displays and Optoelectronic Technologies, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology) (Figure 1(d)) reviewed photoalignment techniques in liquid crystal design.

The program included over 20 invited talks, numerous oral and short oral contributions, and two very well attended, large poster sessions on Monday and Tuesday.

The conference paid special attention to areas such as ferroelectric nematics, which emerged as a dominant theme, as well as to photonic systems, theory and simulations, polymers, elastomers, colloids and gels, biological and bio-inspired materials, and applications.

There were over 180 poster presentations, and the topics ranged from novel mesogens and synthetic routes to liquid crystal – based sensors, smart windows, and photonic devices (Figure 2).

In tribute to our dear colleague who passed away earlier this year, Rebecca Walker (University of Aberdeen, UK) retraced the personal and scientific journey of Corrie T. Imrie (Figure 3).

The conference was attended by a large number of early career and student researchers. Many of their outstanding contributions were recognised by the presentation of awards. This Student Award competition truly showcased the contributions of the next generation to the field and attracted strong participation. The winners were: Ebba Grönfors from Chalmers University of Technology, Göteborg, Sweden (Shimadzu Corporation Prize); Silvia Papparini from University of Padova, Italy, and Zofia Dziekan from Warsaw University, Poland (Outstanding Oral Presentation sponsored by Crystals journal); Zola Korenjak from Jozef Stefan Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia (Outstanding poster presentation sponsored by Soft Matter journal); Sara Klopčič from Jozef Stefan Institute, Joanna Medrzycka from Warsaw University, Aleksander Jarosik from Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg, Germany, Shona Ramsay from University of Aberdeen, UK, Abigail Pearson from University of Aberdeen, Falk Feucht from University of Strasbourg, France, Linsy Jane Selvin Robert from Jozef Stefan Institute, and Fatemeh Abbasi from Ghent University, Belgium (Outstanding poster presentation sponsored by Taylor & Francis publishing house).

The conference fostered collaboration through events such as the Welcome Drink and Conference Dinner at Vila Kajetánka (Figure 4). These events provided a relaxed atmosphere in which attendees could connect with peers and explore opportunities for future joint research.

ECLC 2025 reaffirmed the dynamic growth of liquid crystal science. From fundamental phase behaviour and properties to high-tech applications, the conference offered a comprehensive overview of current trends and inspired ideas for future research. It leaves the community to thank the organisational team (Figure 5) for a very well-organised meeting in the beautiful setting of the city of Prague.

The 18th ECLC will be held in Aberdeen in 2027.



Figure 1. The four plenary speakers at the 2025 European conference on liquid crystals, (a) Maria H. Godinho, (b) Ivan I. Smalyukh, (c) Damian Pocięcha, and (d) Kristiaan Neyts.

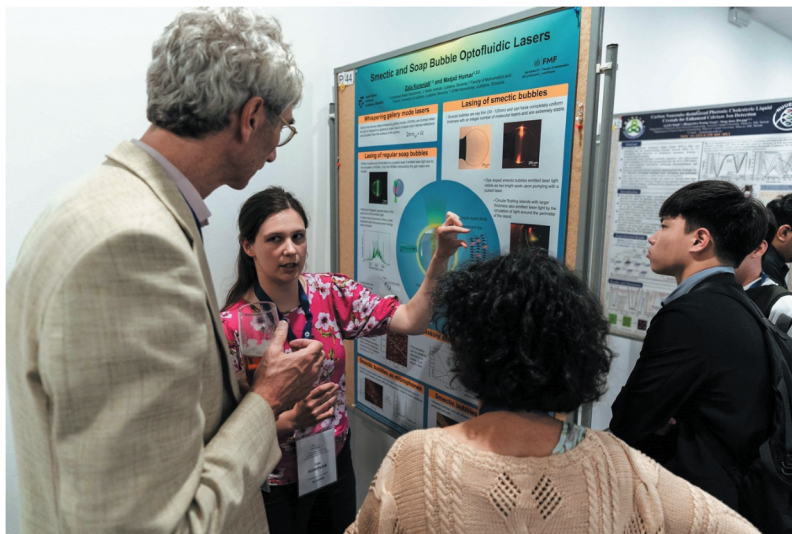


Figure 2. Snapshot at one of the poster sessions. A total of more than 180 posters were presented at the ECLC2025.



Figure 3. Rebecca Walker from the University of Aberdeen paid tribute to colleague and friend Prof. Corrie T. Imrie, who passed away much too early in January 2025.



Figure 4. Conference dinner at the Vila Kajetánka, close to the venue of the conference.



Figure 5. The team of organizers of the 17th European conference on liquid crystals.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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