

## **PREFACE**

*In the past years, pollution caused by waste appliances has become a matter of international concern. Therefore, industries and general public have become increasingly aware of the importance of environmental issues and paid full attention to "green" materials. So, it is not surprising that lead-free products have become the production index of the 21st century worldwide.*

*Following the global trend and the proclaimed guidelines - for both electrical and electronic equipments - to administer waste materials and restrict the use of lead, the technologies for manufacturing reliable lead-free solder materials has been developed and are still developing. A great deal of effort has been put into the investigation of different lead-free solder alloys within the past decade, due to a certain criteria which must be taken into account and met before a lead-free solder may be put into use.*

*One among organized activities in lead-free solders research was COST 531 Action. Its scientific program addresses basic scientific research on various properties of possible lead-free solder materials, as well as problems of their practical application and their durability during actual use in all kinds of equipment and their recycling. The action brings together European researchers from universities, research institutions, and industrial research centers working on the development of new lead-free solder materials.*

*This special issue of Journal of Mining and Metallurgy, Section B: Metallurgy contains papers on LEAD-FREE SOLDER MATERIALS topic, written by recognized authorities working together in the frame of COST 531 Action. I am grateful to all the authors present in this issue for their kind collaboration and cooperation.*

*The issue is dedicated to the memory of Prof. dr Riccardo Ferro, University of Genoa (Italy), as one of the eminent scientists in the field and member of Journal of Mining and Metallurgy Editorial Board, who passed away a year ago, in December 2006.*

*Dragana Živković*