We present the achievements of the last years of the experimental and theoretical groups working on hadronic cross section measurements at the low energy $e^+ e^-$ colliders in Beijing, Frascati, Ithaca, Novosibirsk, Stanford and Tsukuba and on λau decays. We sketch the prospects in these fields for the years to come. We emphasize the status and the precision of the Monte Carlo generators used to analyse the hadronic cross section measurements obtained as well with energy scans as with radiative return, to determine luminosities and λau decays. The radiative corrections implemented in the various codes and the contribution of the hadronic vacuum polarisation are discussed.