

What is going to become of *Chemische Berichte/Recueil* and *Liebigs Annalen/Recueil*?

Although these two chemistry journals have a long tradition behind them, they have not shied away from changes! Did you know, for example, that "*Berichte*" and "*Annalen*" have published in English – no longer in German – since 1995? The two journals have also been allocated specific interest areas, and another big move took place at the beginning of this year: the merger with the Dutch "*Recueil des Travaux Chimiques des Pays-Bas*". To accommodate all these changes, widescale reorganization had to take place. However, not only did the daily work continue, but another major and exciting development took place in the background: the changeover to electronic manuscript processing. (For an update see <http://www.wiley-vch.de>). The results of these efforts are concrete and can be seen on the pages of the journals every month.

Subscribers have responded favorably to all the new developments. Appreciated are our short submission-to-publication times, the careful editorial work, and the now successfully introduced efficient and "user-friendly" electronic manuscript processing. A good indicator of this satisfaction is the increasing number of submitted manuscripts, and the resulting thicker journals! We have also taken the initiative with the introduction of our new "Microreviews" section. In this context, we have made a conscious effort to also extend invitations to younger scientists to write "Microreviews" for us. This not only provides them with a platform, but is also an opportunity to distinguish them for their work by giving them the chance (often the first) to give an overview of their developing research.

As soon as the cooperation between the GDCh and the KNCV started, we realized that the traditional names of the national journals would have to go, certainly not later than after the entry of a third European partner. This whole process has set into motion a new era in chemistry publishing; in fact the momentum which emerged during 1997 surprised even those closest to the merging process. After intensive discussions, the national chemistry societies of Belgium, France and Italy have also agreed to bring their journals into the fold, so that the two new journals which will appear on January 1st, 1998 will certainly deserve the term "European." This is a step which we would not have dared to take 20 years ago. (The mood of those times is exemplified by the *Journal of Chemical Research* which never quite managed to emerge from the shadows, to become what it was intended to be at its founding.) We are confident that our base will become broader: further discussions with other European chemical societies on the subject of journal mergers are in progress.

So what is going to become of *Chemische Berichte/Recueil* and *Liebigs Annalen/Recueil*? *Chemische Berichte/Recueil* will become the *European Journal of Inorganic Chemistry* and *Liebigs Annalen/Recueil* will become the *European Journal of Organic Chemistry*. "Inorganic" chemistry will include the fields of organometallic, bioinorganic and solid state chemistry. "Organic" chemistry will embrace the areas of synthetic organic, physical organic, and bioorganic chemistry.

We know that many of our older readers and authors (amongst whom some of us also count!) will find it difficult to part with the old names. A long and significant tradition is attached to the names "*Annalen*", "*Berichte*", and "*Recueil*". Each one of these journals – not one of which is younger than 100 years! – has made a contribution to European chemistry, and now each one will contribute to the synthesis of the new bigger journals.

It is after all not only important to have a luminous past, but one should also have a future! This is not simply a voluntary union based on nebulous feelings such as a euphoria for all things European. The hard facts are that authors and readers are increasingly turning to specialized journals and the powerful journals, especially those of the American Chemical Society. We should meet these challenges! Tradition should not be stuffy and static, but a dynamic process, which thrives on new developments.

We believe that the way forward lies in offering journals of high quality and with wide distribution. High scientific and technical standards are required to meet these demands. To start with, we depend on authors to send us their best work. We expect only benefits to the technical quality and distribution possibilities for the new European journals now that the marketing channels of the world's leading commercial chemistry publisher is available to us in the form of WILEY-VCH. The highly regarded dual referee system, mainly directed from Weinheim, in which editors from the participating chemical societies, as well as specialists from all over the world are involved, would ensure a high quality of printed contributions. The newest technical developments will make shorter publication times than ever before possible: At most four weeks after the receipt of the contribution by the journal, the referees' reports should be available. The largely computer-based manuscript editing, including language polishing where needed, does not require more than two weeks in general. With the help of a WILEY-VCH-developed process, it is now possible to convert at least 90% of the manuscripts which were submitted in electronic form to a universal format (SGML), which can be read by the typesetting systems. The advantages for the authors are clear: the time-consuming proofreading of the manuscript prints is reduced considerably, so that in essence only page layout, graphics, and exotic special symbols need to be checked. Up to now 50% of all submitted manuscripts were published four months after submission. This can now be reduced at least by one month!

The chemical societies, the editorial board, and the editorial office are confident that the challenges attached to the fast changing area of publication can be met structurally and organizationally.

We hope that our authors would also identify with these goals and would contribute to the development of *Eur. J. Org. Chem.* and *Eur. J. Inorg. Chem.* in the same spirit as they have done up to now to *Chemische Berichte/Recueil* and *Liebigs Annalen/Recueil*.

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