

En Route to European Journals of Inorganic and Organic Chemistry

In 1997 a new journal structure for the chemical literature in Europe will begin to evolve. *Recueil des Travaux Chimiques des Pays-Bas* will unite with *Liebigs Annalen* and *Chemische Berichte*; furthermore, *Chemistry – A European Journal* will become independent of *Angewandte Chemie*, its “carrier journal”. *Recueil* was founded in 1882 and is the journal of the Royal Netherlands Chemical Society (KNCV); *Chemische Berichte* (1865) and *Liebigs Annalen* (1832) are German Chemical Society (GDCh) journals. With these heritages in mind, we will apply the image of a “European House”, often used by politicians, to scientific publishing in Europe.

First, a strong foundation is laid. A journal lives and dies by the way it treats its authors. This responsibility lies directly in the hands of the editorial staff. Manuscript turn-around time (submission to print) must be kept short. Editorial work (margins, punctuation, style of referencing) is the job of the editors; chemists do chemistry. That chemistry must be brought to the widest possible readership and new technologies, such as Internet services, must be probed to achieve that task. Based on this premise – ease of publication and a wide readership – a journal can strive for success.

The walls go up. These walls are primary literature journals specializing in full reports; they are designated to cover certain areas of chemistry; they have the grass-roots support of European authors. These journals are *Chemische Berichte*, *Inorganic and Organometallic Chemistry – A European Journal* and *Liebigs Annalen*, *Organic and Bioorganic Chemistry – A European Journal*, now united with *Recueil*, the journal of the Royal Netherlands Chemical Society.

The individual walls in a house have in common the roof. Wall journals and roof journals have a common author and reader base, but the articles on top have a different perspective. *Angewandte Chemie* is one of the world-wide leading publications for review articles and important communications, and *Chemistry* publishes full papers. Yet they both present articles of general interest from all disciplines of chemistry. In contrast, *Berichte* focuses on aspects of inorganic chemistry and *Annalen* is devoted to organic chemistry. Similarly, *Recueil* is largely devoted to organic chemistry, although it also publishes papers on organometallic chemistry and other chemical disciplines. The roof completes a cohesive unit; the walls carry the roof.

To establish *European* journals by cooperation or merger of the traditional national journals is not a new idea. For a long time the momentum was lacking. However, the last few years have brought dramatic changes in this respect. The need for a supranational effort is caused by increasing international competition between scientific journals, steadily rising economic constraints and the dramatic development of the electronic media. With the unification of *Recueil*, *Berichte* and *Annalen* the process has been initiated. Now the momentum is building, and other European chemical societies and their journals are being welcomed into the house.

Berichte, *Annalen* and *Recueil* are classic journals with a long and rich history. Although they are also economically sound journals, the German Chemical Society and the Royal Netherlands Chemical Society began merger talks about a year ago with the intention of precipitating the inevitable. The most important prerequisite for cooperation and future development is a common European publication language; in chemistry this language is English. Each of the journals already has this element in place. Each of the journals also brings more than a century of past excellence to this merger as a guarantee for the future excellence of the new journals. The united journals are becoming leading scientific publications in organic and inorganic chemistry.

As a reader and author your support is essential. If you share the above goals, publish your best work in the new European journals. As our partner, when you pick up this issue of *Berichte/Recueil* or *Annalen/Recueil* you will hold in your hand an indispensable source of information at the forefront of our science!

Jan B. F. N. Engberts, Klaus Hafner, Henning Hopf
Heads, Editorial Advisory Board *Liebigs Annalen/Recueil*

P.S. By the way, the word *European* is not meant to be exclusive – it refers to the origin (and to some extent the history) of the *journals* rather than the origin of the *publications*. (Our author *Guidelines* are available worldwide on the Internet: <http://www.vchgroup.de/home/liebigsann> or <http://www.vchgroup.de/home/chember>)