

Editorial

On January 2004, Professor Tito Arecchi stepped down at the end of his term of duty as an Editor-in-Chief. Professor Franco Gianturco, from the University La Sapienza in Rome, has taken up this position and will therefore be a co-Editor-in-Chief for EPJ D, together with Professor Jean-Michel Raimond, for the next three years.

We very warmly thank Tito for his untiring contributions to the life and welfare of EPJ D and wish him all the best for his future endeavours: we certainly still count on having his help and his advice for many years to come and trust that he will continue to publish with us, encouraging younger colleagues to do the same.

The terms of a few members of the Editorial Board also came to their end. Their contribution and their dedication to the task have been essential for the journal's life. They also deserve our warmest thanks. New members have thus joined the board. Some of them reinforce our expertise in Atomic Physics, Quantum Optics and Quantum Information. Others extend it in the fields of Molecular Physics, Chemical Physics and Quantum Chemistry. We welcome them all and are very happy that they accepted enthusiastically to come on board and to help steer EPJ D to greater achievements and to better endeavours. At this critical time of life for printed Journals and for many scientific publishing ventures in Europe, it is really heart-warming to see so many colleagues willing to lend a hand in making things better.

Furthermore, the new Editor-in-Chief's areas of scientific interests (you can see them at: <http://www.chem.uniroma1.it/~gianturc/>) and those of many of the new members of the Editorial Board are clearly pointing at an increased interest in our Journal in works dealing with the physics of molecules and molecular aggregates. These fields touch on many research areas that are currently very active (from modelling bio-systems to Bose-Einstein molecular condensates, to mention a couple). We strongly hope that more members of those communities will come to consider EPJ D as one of the prime carriers of their better research results.

Such hope is also made more real by the recent changes in our editorial procedures that have the main aim of reducing as much as possible, but without lowering acceptance standards, the time between submission and publication of new results. To this end, EPJ D has also caught up with the most advanced scientific Journals and now provides the authors, referees and editors an efficient version of its Manuscript Management System (MMS) that allows markedly reduced procedural times.

All editors are also encouraged to use especially fast publishing procedures for those papers which they identify as being potentially of greater impact in their own areas. Such procedures should allow paper processing within at most ten days from reception. Furthermore, we have launched a "highlighting" procedure for those papers whose quality and relevance could attract a large attention. The editorial office will organize a free distribution of the paper to a list of contacts provided by the authors, on their behalf. Special emphasis will be put on these papers in the printed journal and in the on-line version to increase their visibility. The first "EPJ D Highlight" paper is presented in this issue.

Finally, we also encourage authors, or group of authors, to directly contact the Editors-in-Chief for the preparation of Special Issues that are entirely dedicated to a well identified and active area of research, or to some topic that is suddenly coming to maturity, for a collective assessment via a selected set of specific publications. Due to printed page number limitations, we can accommodate two or three such Special Issues per year without causing a backlog of regular papers. We might thus not be able to welcome all propositions. Nevertheless, our past experience has been that such topical issues (handled directly by the proposing editors in terms of scope and organization) are very extensively quoted and cause marked “jumps” in the Impact Factor of the Journal. They also provide a set of benchmark references to a given area and a very useful learning research tool: both services to our community that we hope will be useful to us all.

In sum, we feel that EPJ D is alive and well but that it should do still better and should further broaden its presence within the scientific community: this is why we welcome all the above changes and trust that scientists, in Europe and elsewhere, will show their preferences by sending their work to our new team of editors.

F.A. Gianturco
J.-M. Raimond