

# Angewandte Chemie International Edition Celebrates Its 50th Birthday

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At birthday parties, friends meet, talk, exchange news, and celebrate with the person of honor. In science, we celebrate birthdays with scientific exchange, with scientific communication. And that is just what *Angewandte Chemie* is doing with this excellent issue, which appears in conjunction with two symposia with a special program in Beijing and Tokyo on June 20th and 22nd. We, that is, the Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker (GDCh, German Chemical Society), the owner of *Angewandte Chemie*, and the publisher Wiley-VCH, are proud to celebrate 50 years of *Angewandte Chemie International Edition*.

With a current impact factor of almost 12, *Angewandte Chemie* belongs to the top tier of science journals and is a leader among general chemistry publications. The article mix of Reviews, Communications, and many smaller sections—from Essays to Highlights to Obituaries—makes “*Angewandte*”, as it is known around the world, a one-of-a-kind science journal. This is first and foremost because of the excellent authors and the critical and careful referees. It goes without saying that the authors and referees of a top journal come from around the world, and globalization at *Angewandte Chemie* was fact from very early on. Another important reason for *Angewandte*’s success is the international editorial team. The editors who come from five different countries carry out their duties with excellent knowledge of the subject mat-

ter, precise understanding of the language, significant know-how when it comes to presentation, and, last but not least, the right touch with authors and referees. And you, dear reader, you also make a special contribution to the success of the journal by reading it critically and valuing its high quality over the years. As a former member of the Editorial Board of *Angewandte Chemie* and the current president of the GDCh, I would also like to note the important role of the Editorial Board and the International Advisory Board. The Editorial Board comprises representatives from academic and industrial research from German-speaking countries, who advise and monitor the editorial office on behalf of the GDCh. Many Review articles in the journal were initiated by a suggestion from an Editorial Board member, as well. But the

## Publications present new knowledge

board members do more than just give tips and advice, they also submit a host of standard-setting contributions, such as the Review by the current Chairman of the Editorial Board, François Dieckerich, in this issue. The International Advisory Board ensures that *Angewandte Chemie* is firmly footed in the international chemical community, and Advisory Board members also give valuable advice and publish many high-quality contributions, such as the Review by George Whitesides, which also appears in this issue. In light of the

symposia mentioned above, this issue contains predominantly articles from Chinese, Japanese, and German authors. More information about the symposia can be found in the advertisements in this issue and under <http://www.angewandte.org/symposium>.

*Angewandte Chemie* has worked hard to achieve a leading position by publishing a unique mix of outstanding Reviews, sharply focused Highlights that reflect new research trends, and top Communications from the best research groups in all areas of chemistry and related fields. Success has been built upon the confluence of the most recent results from all chemical and chemistry-related interdisciplinary fields, including applied industrial research.

Publications are the presentation of newly won knowledge. This description of knowledge, however, almost always forms the basis for new questions, for knowledge is never complete. Considering the future, we find more questions than answers. And just this future is the motto of the International Year of Chemistry: “Chemistry—our life, our future.” Is this not also a suitable motto for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of a top international chemistry journal? As an industrial chemist, my answer is a clear “yes”, and I am sure that academic scientists will agree. After all, excellent basic research is the foundation for solutions to future problems. Chemical problem-solving expertise is needed now more than ever so that everybody can have clean air, safe water, healthy food, reliable medicine, and environmentally friendly products

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and so that materials and energy production can become more sustainable. From the beginning of industrialization, this expertise, especially in chemistry, has been founded in basic research, which has inspired applied research and development and shown them where to look for new solutions. Both well-planned research and serendipitous discoveries are important sources of new insight and new products.

Another important anniversary is also being celebrated during the International Year of Chemistry: 100 years ago, Marie Skłodowska Curie received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry (see also the Essay by Christoph Friedrich and Horst Remane in this issue). She was a notable personality who did not restrict herself to deskwork but, as is common in chemistry, made her important discoveries in the laboratory. Well-known pictures show her in her laboratory, stirring a huge kettle. Marie Curie fought tenaciously and successfully against all odds, and that with a family and at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. In contrast to the situation back then, there are many young women today who are drawn to chemistry, and I hope that they will be inspired by this wonderful role model and find their way to academic careers and executive positions in industry.

Marie Curie's story and her research also show us another side of the natural sciences. Especially her discovery of the radioactive elements radium and polonium and her, by current standards, improper handling of these dangerous substances, the properties of which she could not know, show us our limits. Not all forms of technology that we as

humans have developed and that we believe to control are really controllable in a worst-case scenario. Humans, and scientists, are fallible. In light of a growing world population hungry for food and hungry for energy, we in Germany, as in many other countries, have invested in the peaceful utilization of the energy that is released by the radioactive decay of atomic nuclei and have built nuclear power plants. Now the terrible catastrophe in Japan has shown us that humans can neither control nature nor completely and accurately predict its behavior. Once again, we have been forced to recognize that our technology is not just a blessing but can also be a curse.

I would like to express my sorrow for the victims of the Japanese earthquake and extend my heartfelt sympathy to those who have suffered both physically and emotionally in this tragedy. As scientists and technicians, careful consideration of our actions will have to be even more important than before this disaster. Nevertheless, we should not despair in the future but must continue resolutely to apply our knowledge to the solution of future challenges. Scientists are, unfortunately, not always able to avert natural disasters, but the reactor damage that has now resulted cautions us to search for safer solutions to the energy question. As chemists, we can make an important contribution here, especially in the search for new materials for energy production and storage, for example, for photovoltaic cells or new battery systems.

As an example of eminently important international cooperation, please note the recently published white paper "A

Sustainable Global Society: How Can Materials Chemistry Help?", which presents the results of the second Chemical Sciences and Society Summit (CS3) and which deals mainly with sustainable materials (see [http://www.gdch.de/tatigkeiten/wpub/broschueren\\_e.htm](http://www.gdch.de/tatigkeiten/wpub/broschueren_e.htm)). In September 2010, 30 top international materials chemists from the five participating countries, China, Germany, the UK, Japan, and the USA, met in London. They identified the research that will be necessary for sustainable materials and formulated corresponding recommendations for politics. The CS3 talks are an example of successful cooperation between the Chinese Chemical Society (CCS), the German Chemical Society (GDCh), the Chemical Society of Japan (CSJ), the Royal Society of Chemistry (UK), the American Chemical Society (ACS), and the corresponding national research funding institutions. For the exchange of knowledge on a global level, 2011 offers another interesting anniversary: in 1911 the International Association of Chemical Societies was founded, with Nobel Laureate and catalysis chemist Wilhelm Ostwald as president. It was the predecessor of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC).

And so the circle closes. We are celebrating 50 years of *Angewandte Chemie International Edition*; the journal offers a platform for the international exchange of knowledge of the highest standard from all areas of chemistry and related fields. I wish the editorial team, the publisher Wiley-VCH, and the owner, the GDCh, success in maintaining and expanding this position!