

Editorial

Dear Reader,

As on the occasion of previous Special Issues, I take pleasure in informing you on the current state of our, i.e. 'your', journal. As I see it, it keeps thriving by all criteria. The much praised, and much maligned, impact factor has, over recent years, been as follows:

1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987
3.600	3.339	3.505	3.479	3.420	3.361	3.566	3.381

We have reached, therefore, an all-time highest impact factor. Moreover, if correction is made for the length of the papers published (approx. 4.5 pages in our journal), we are very close to the level of *J. Biol. Chem.*, leaving behind nearly all international biochemical and molecular-biological journals. Perhaps even more important than the impact factor, is the general consensus among our Editors that the manuscripts we receive are of timely interest and of increasing scientific quality; e.g. last year we published a first spin-off paper from the total genome sequencing project.

A criterion of a totally different kind, but pointing in the same direction, is that we seem to suffer less than other journals from the critical financial situation of most libraries in the world. In the last years we have lost no more than a few percent of our subscriptions. Up to now we have succeeded in keeping the price of our journal essentially at the 1994 level, whilst, at the same time, trying to be friendly to the authors (see below).

An important factor contributing to the fact that our journal attracts interesting papers is certainly the fast publication time, which is now as short (7.2 weeks, or 36 working days, see Fig. 1) as it probably can be without jeopardising the quality of the reviewing process, or that of the production. Fast, but selective, publication is the result of the unrelenting efforts of all parties involved: editors, reviewers, secretaries, publishers, printers, and indeed, last but not least, of the authors themselves who send us scientifically good, well-written and carefully produced manuscripts. Many details in our Notes to Authors may seem irrelevant, but are often important for fast handling, reviewing, and production.

The goal of the Federation of European Biochemical Societies, FEBS, a non-profit organisation, has always been that of fostering European Biochemistry, e.g. by providing young biochemists with fellowships, advanced courses, travel funds, etc.

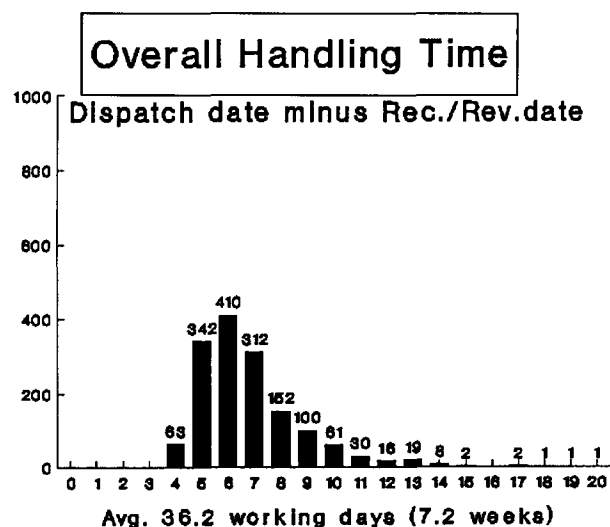


Fig. 1. Overall publication time of all communications published in 1995 (Volumes 357–377): date of despatch from warehouse minus date of receipt of revised manuscript or first editor's date of receipt when no revision was involved. Average publication time: 36.2 working days (7.2 weeks).

(see also at the end of this issue). In this spirit we do not levy page charges, do not charge for half-tone pictures, and keep the costs of colour pictures at a minimum. We keep the running and production costs under close and critical scrutiny.

The present Special Issue follows the format of the previous ones, offering the full text of the 9th Datta Lecture (by Charles Weissmann), and a number of minireviews. The latter have been organised by M. Saraste and F. Wieland, Heidelberg. On your behalf and on that of the Editorial Board I would like to thank them for their excellent work.

Zürich, June 1996

G. Semenza

PS. Information on our journal (e.g. on our editorial policy, instructions to authors, our Editors' addresses, the contents of recent issues, etc.) is now available via internet. The address is: <http://www.elsevier.nl/locate/febslet> (for N. America: <http://www.elsevier.com/locate/febslet>).

Table 1
Geographical Distribution FEBS Letters Vol. 357-377 (1995)

Country	Origin of papers		Journal distribution	
	No.	%	No.**	%
Austria	21	1.4	10	0.7
Belgium	19	1.2	11	0.7
Bulgaria	1	0.1		
Byelorussia	1	0.1		
Czech Republic	4	0.3		
Denmark	33	2.1	12	0.8
Estonia	1	0.1		
Finland	9	0.6	9	0.6
France	129	8.3	70	4.6
Germany	197	12.7	128	8.4
Greece	4	0.3	6	0.4
Hungary	6	0.4	8	0.5
Israel	24	1.5	11	0.7
Ireland	3	0.2		
Italy	80	5.2	67	4.4
The Netherlands	44	2.8	39	2.6
Norway	1	0.1	7	0.5
Poland	4	0.3	8	0.5
Portugal	1	0.1		
Russia	81	5.2	6	0.4
Slovak Republic	2	0.1		
Slovenia	3	0.2		
Spain	49	3.2	31	2.0
Sweden	46	3.0	19	1.3
Switzerland	41	2.6	24	1.6
UK	164	10.6	107	7.0
Rest of Europe*			21	1.4
EUROPE TOTAL	968	62.4	594	39.0
South Africa	1	0.1	7	0.5
Rest of Africa*			3	0.2
AFRICA TOTAL	1	0.1	10	0.7
Hong Kong	3	0.2		
India	13	0.8	20	1.3
Japan	237	15.3	287	18.9
Malaysia			4	0.3
P. Rep. China	4	0.3	6	0.4
South Korea	5	0.3	24	1.6
Taiwan	3	0.2	11	0.7
Rest of Asia*	1	0.1	13	0.9
ASIA TOTAL	266	17.1	365	24.0
Argentina	2	0.1		
Brazil	3	0.2	16	1.1
Chile	7	0.5	4	0.3
Mexico	4	0.3	8	0.5
Canada	34	2.2	42	2.8
USA	244	15.8	445	29.3
Rest of America*			9	0.6
AMERICA TOTAL	294	18.9	524	34.4
Australia	21	1.4	25	1.6
New Zealand	2	0.1	6	0.4
AUSTRALASIA TOTAL	23	1.5	31	2.0
WORLD TOTAL	1552	100%	1524	100%
Free subscriptions			53	

*Countries with less than four subscriptions are listed under 'Rest Countries'.

**Includes direct subscriptions plus subscriptions placed through an agent in that country (possibly for distribution elsewhere).