

Editorial

Dear authors, readers, and colleagues:

The Editorial Office of *FEBS Letters* has moved from Zürich to Heidelberg earlier this year. This Office coordinates distribution and handling of submitted manuscripts, but the actual scientific evaluation of manuscripts is carried out by the members of Editorial Board. In our office, two Editorial Assistants, Drs. Rosa Benito-Moreno and Connie Lee, take care of the manuscript handling and editorial management.

The role of Editors is the key factor in running *FEBS Letters* and further improving the scientific quality of this journal. The subject area of *FEBS Letters* is broad. Consequently, organizing the reviewing and evaluation of submitted papers requires team work of a number of specialists in different areas of research. The Editors are appointed to form a board in which their complementary expertise covers large areas of molecular life science. We have recently appointed four new Editors. Gianni Cesarini (Rome), Veli-Pekka Lehto (Oulu), and Giulio Superti-Furga (Heidelberg) joined the board in the beginning of the year to strengthen the Board's collective knowledge on functional genomics, molecular cell biology and molecular medicine, and cell signalling. Our newest recruit, Amy McGough (West Lafayette), begins as Editor in June. Her specific research areas are linked to cytoskeleton and muscle.

The Editorial Board reflects the international character and wide coverage of *FEBS Letters*. The papers published in this journal originate from all parts of the globe (Fig. 1). The operational mode is not, however, governed by geographical links between the authors and editors. In contrast, we strongly endorse the policy of linking, in the best possible manner, the research topics of the authors to the areas of expertise that the editors specify for themselves and their local scientific community. The Editorial Office takes the task of coordinating these factors.

FEBS Letters is a fast journal. The publication of an average paper takes less than a month from the date of acceptance. The handling time of our publisher, Elsevier, is now below twenty working days, and the accepted papers appear in preprint form on the *FEBS Letters*' web site (<http://www.elsevier.nl/febslet>) in a week from the day of acceptance. We can guarantee that a high-quality paper that requires no revision can appear in print within two months from the day of receipt. With the help of the staff at Elsevier, we are now setting up a web server for electronic submission. This will further speed up the submission and reviewing procedures. Information on the electronic submission procedure is available on web.

In 1999, *FEBS Letters* received 3531 manuscripts. Almost half of these were published (rejection rate was 52%). This year, the submission rate is still increasing - the total number of submissions is heading towards 3800. As the number of printed pages in the journal is not going up, we are forced to increase the rejection rate. The Editorial Office has adopted a new operational mode in part to control the size of the printed journal. The Office returns manuscripts back to the authors when these do not fall within the scope of the journal, or do not merit urgent publication due to their technical nature or limited general interest.

FEBS Letters is a widely distributed and recognized journal that belongs to rank of key publication vehicles in biochemistry and molecular biology. The papers we publish receive immediate recognition as demonstrated by high citation numbers of the top publications. The champions in 1996 and 1997 have received 146 and 137 citations by the end of 1999. These papers describe discoveries of a novel estrogen receptor and a new variant of the mitochondrial uncoupling protein, respectively [1,2]. *FEBS Letters* is also proud to offer a rapid medium for comments and reactions to the progress at cutting edge of science. To give a recent example, the experimental setup of a paper on possible rotation of the membrane sector in the ATP synthase that was published in another journal at the end of November, 1999 [3], was quickly criticized in our issue at the end of March this year [4], and an improved experiment was published by us in April [5]. This kind of "experimental dialogue" gains from our high publication speed.

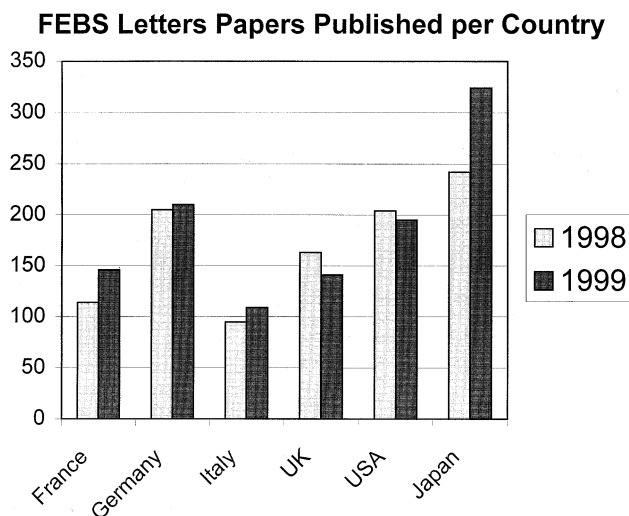


Fig. 1. *FEBS Letters* papers published per country. Data for six countries with highest numbers of papers - 1998 vs. 1999.

We intend to publish more Special Issues, similar to the one you have in hand, and short reviews on "hot topics" in biochemistry, biophysics, and molecular biology. Dr Connie Lee in the Editorial Office coordinates the minireview section of the journal. The authors who are interested in submitting such a review should contact her. In addition, a new section called "Correspondence" now appears in our back pages. Short communications that are published in "Correspondence" will facilitate discussion on the papers published in *FEBS Letters* and in other journals.

We thank the authors, editors and all fellow scientists for their interest and support for *FEBS Letters*. Special thanks go to Gunnar von Heijne for editing this Special Issue.

Heidelberg and Zürich, May 2000
Matti Saraste, Giorgio Semenza

Please note

The instructions to authors have been thoroughly revised. The new "Notes to Authors" appear at the end of this issue.

All submissions should be sent to
FEBS Letters Editorial Office
European Molecular Biology Laboratory
Meyerhofstrasse 1
D-69117 Heidelberg
Germany
The fax number is +49 6221 387592,
and e-mail: FEBS.Letters@embl-heidelberg.de

References

- [1] Mosselman, S., Polman, J. and Dijkema, R. (1996) *FEBS Lett.* 392, 39–42.
- [2] Boss, O., Samec, S., Paoloni-Giacobino, A., Rossier, C., Dulloo, A., Seydoux, J., Muzzin, P. and Giacobino, J.-P. (1997) *FEBS Lett.* 408, 39–42.
- [3] Sambongi, Y., Iko, Y., Tanabe, M., Omote, H., Iwamoto-Kihara, A., Ueda, I., Yanagida, T., Wada, Y. and Futai, M. (1999) *Science* 286, 1722–1724.
- [4] Tsunoda, S.p., Aggeler, R., Noji, H., Kinosita Jr., K., Yoshida, M. and Capaldi, R.A. (2000) *FEBS Lett.* 470, 244–248.
- [5] Pänke, O., Gumbiowski, K., Junge, W. and Engelbrecht, S. (2000) *FEBS Lett.* 472, 34–38.