

Editorial

ESPR – A Journal for our Time

Co-editors: Alvin L. Young¹, John V. Holder², Gerhard Lammel³, Peter Luthardt⁴, Steven C. McCutcheon⁵ and Stefan Trapp⁶

¹ Visiting Professor, Institute for Science and Public Policy, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, USA

² Visiting Fellow, University of Lancaster, Institute for Environmental and Natural Sciences, Lancaster, UK

³ Max Planck Institute for Meteorology, Centre for Marine and Atmospheric Sciences (ZMAW), Hamburg, Germany

⁴ Managing Director, Centre for Olfactometry (ZfO), Muenster, Germany

⁵ University of Georgia, Driftmier Engineering Center, Athens, GA, USA

⁶ Environment & Resources DTU, Technical University of Denmark, Kongens Lyngby, Denmark

Environmental science is a relatively new discipline. As co-editors of Environmental Science and Pollution Research (ESPR) we can reflect on a time when our field research programs on pesticides and other pollutants in the environment were challenged not just with finding new sampling and analytical methodologies to assess impacts, but conducting research that also supported regulatory action. We struggled to collect valid data, but we faced a shortage of journals to which we could submit our research for critical peer review. We recognized that critical peer review required a broad interdisciplinary outlook if it was to appropriately serve an interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary society that depended upon high quality data, diverse methodologies, disciplinary cultures, and information for decision-making. How to organize and establish a new journal that met our needs were intriguing questions. We are all thankful for the incredible experiences and insights of Professor Otto Hutzinger who accepted the challenge of establishing the high quality journal that we have today.

The journal was officially established in 1994 with the following goals:

- To serve the international scientific community in all areas of environmental science and related subjects with special emphasis on chemical compounds.
- To report from a broad interdisciplinary outlook with emphasis on the natural sciences, including education, legislation, regulation, and economics.
- To serve a large and diverse audience including environmental scientists from academia and industry, environmental engineers, physicians, public and industrial health personnel, environmental consultants, lawyers, regulators, and special interest action groups.
- To publish, apart from the strictly scientific contributions as research articles and reviews, reports from research and technology, legislation and regulation, education, literature, institutions, organizations, conferences, and news & views on the latest trends and developments in the environmental areas.

Have we been successful? A quick look over the past eleven years of publishing the journal reveals the interdisciplinary nature and originality of contributions of ESPR with outstanding papers published on: ancient atmospheres (1994), from hazard assessment to life cycle assessment (1995), hydrophobic compounds in soil and water, formation of PCDDs and PCDFs (1996), the Internet and global environmental information (1997), description and evaluation of stress to mountain forest ecosystems (1998), origin of persistent chemicals in the environment (1999), facing the environmental risk issues of the cold war legacy (2000), dioxin contamination in food (2001), phytoremediation, and long-range transport of POPs (2002), mass-spectrometric patterns of carbon compounds in smoker's lung *in situ*, and reflections on the Chernobyl accident (2003), and assessment of exposures to Agent Orange in Vietnam (2004). The breadth of our contributing authors is world-wide. The journal has gone from four issues per year to six issues per year.

If you visit our journal's web site (<http://www.scientificjournals.com/espr/>), you will notice some outstanding features such as, besides the **Author Index**, the **Subject Index** of published articles that can be

called up with the aid of key words (accessible for free). The **Web Editions** (back issues) provide access to the articles that have been published since 1998 by way of the Table of Contents of every individual new issue. The journal's **Online First** is a service where articles can be published shortly after their acceptance by reviewers, authors, and editors, which means weeks or months before they will appear in the printed journal and even before the issue number and the true page numbers have been determined. ESPR is indexed and abstracted by the major abstracting services (e.g., BIOSIS, CAS, CSI, ISI, and Current Contents). Furthermore, ESPR has been selected for coverage in the **Science Citation Index** beginning with Volume 7, 2000. The 2003 Journal Citation Reports (JCR) ranks ESPR number 52 out of 131 in the Environmental Sciences with an **impact factor of 1.216**, which is very satisfactory in this short period. Citation is merely one indicator for the journal's successful accomplishment.

ESPR has become the official organ of the Division for Chemistry and the Environment of the European Association for Chemical and Molecular Societies (EUChemS, formerly FECS). In reality, ESPR serves the international scientific community in all areas of environmental subjects, with emphasis on chemical compounds.

No doubt, there is still need for improvements. For the future we must continue to emphasize the journal's rigorous refereeing procedures by inviting top environmental scientists. We must ensure that regulatory and editorial views are expressed as free as possible of political influence of any particular country, and that contributions are committed as little as possible to any specific school of thought on scientific issues. We must continue to encourage a broad approach across the disciplines and by soliciting articles, reviews, and reports from academia, research institutions, industry, consulting laboratories, and from governmental agencies. And, we have the task of actively soliciting contributions from, and providing a forum for emerging scientific issues. Through the peer review process, ESPR has encouraged contributions from workers and groups in countries that have less well established infrastructures in the environmental sciences than we in Western Europe, the United States and Japan enjoy. Pollution is a global problem and will not be solved without parallel development of research. ESPR promotes excellence but not elitism.

Administratively, we have decided that we must be more responsive to those individuals wishing to contribute papers to ESPR. At this time, abstracts and manuscripts are received by the Publisher Editor, who in turn solicits from us and the Editorial Board individuals to do the pre-review and the in-depth peer reviews. One proposal is to have authors submit manuscripts directly to the Co-editors within their areas of expertise (the concept of subject editors). The Co-editors would then take responsibility for performing the review process. The new administrative procedures will be detailed soon.

Through a rigorous process of peer review, the soliciting of outstanding scientists for our Editorial Board, and by broadening the distribution and subscriptions of our journal can we be satisfied that we have established ESPR as a journal for our time!