

# A New Journal for Europe

Journal editors in the US can't help having successful journals. It's not their fault. But it's time, say **Siegfried Grossmann** and **Denis Jérôme**, for European editors to learn from their American colleagues and concentrate their efforts

“Publishing constitutes a large part of a scientist's activity. By publishing, a physicist contributes to the enrichment of knowledge and to the diffusion of information through the scientific community and beyond, thereby ensuring progress in research. And publication is also the basis of peer-review evaluation.

We are presently facing a rapid growth in the number of publications, which is increasing even faster than the number of researchers. The famous words ‘publish or perish’ may be partly responsible for this. Also, we should not be surprised if a physicist wishes to submit his or her work for publication in a journal that combines both high scientific recognition and a large dissemination. But this has led to a strong polarisation of the physics publishing activity.

The spectacular growth of *The Physical Review* published by the American Physical Society (APS) in the US, largely due to the increase of non-US submissions, could actually be a worry for its own editors as well as its authors and readers. As a journal increases in size the subscription price increases also, which makes the journal more difficult to afford. In APS News, May 1995, Eugen Merzbacher, an ex-President of APS, said: “Our journals are very successful, and this success is cause for pride and satisfaction, but uncontrolled growth has the potential to imperil the quality of the publications, as well as the fiscal stability of the Society.”

The growth of submissions to *Physical Review* from Europe is not surprising since European laboratories contribute to about one third of the world's scientific production, and approximately half of the articles published in *Physical Review B* or *E* (for instance) originate either from a European laboratory or from a European team working with their colleagues in a US laboratory.

So, there is a massive and continuous flow of European papers submitted to The

*Physical Review*. This situation will not be healthy in the long term, neither for the quality of *Physical Review* nor for the plurality of publishing services. As far as Europe is concerned, there exist, in spite of healthy scientific activity, only distinguished centennial reviews with a limited distribution which publish a minor fraction of the whole European production. So, scientific activity in Europe, which is comprehensive and of a very high standard deserves the search for a more focused and better balanced means of publication.

There is no future in the proliferation of periodicals which remain essentially restricted to the European stage.

Universities, libraries, etc soon will no longer be able to subscribe to a zoo of journals because of limited budgets. Electronic publishing has been considered by some of us as a possibility to cope with this situation in the future. Data bases, pre-print bases, etc can be very helpful to us but can one imagine a serious committee deciding about grants or promotions solely on the basis of submissions to a server?

Evaluation and editing are the two *raison d'être* for a journal whether it is published electronically or in hard copy (or even both together as done usually nowadays). If Europe wishes to remain at the highest scientific level it must succeed in decreasing the number of journals,

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achieving an increased world wide diffusion and making them more attractive to their own readers and those in the rest of the world.

The seed of this future is going to appear in January 1998 with the beginning of *European Physics Review (EPR)* which is the product of a merger between *Journal de Physique* and *Zeitschrift für Physik* conducted in co-operation by Les Éditions de Physique and Springer-Verlag [also the publishers of *EN - Ed*]. The number of pages and hence the cost will be reduced. Consequently, the subscription to the new journal will be less than the sum of the two original reviews. Furthermore the board of editors hopes to establish a constructive cooperation between *EPR* and the already existing *Europhysics Letters*. The existence of *EPR* will mean that from 1988 Europe will have taken its first stride towards concentrating its publishing activities,

following the example of the successful policy of journals in the US.

We hope that *European Physics Review* will serve as a nucleus and attract further mergers with other national physics journals, and that this will strengthen publishing in Europe by offering authors distribution of their research efforts to an audience much larger than formerly reached by the national journals. It will thus reflect the current political and economic drive towards unity in Europe, and at the same time broaden the community which reads and publishes in a well recognised European Journal. ☺

Siegfried Grossmann  
Denis Jérôme  
Editors-in-Chief for EPR-B

## The Subject Matter

There will be four sections of *EPR* for basic science, distributed by Springer-Verlag in Berlin. Two sections, *EPR-B* and *D*, will include the former *Journal de Physique I, II* and *Zeitschrift für Physik B, D* with a rearranged and enlarged catalogue of subfields. Sections *EPR-A, C* will continue the tradition of *Zeitschrift für Physik A, C* under the sole responsibility of Springer-Verlag. *EPR-B* will publish articles in Condensed and Soft Condensed Matter, Statistical Physics, Mesoscopic Physics, Physical Mechanics, Hydrodynamics, General and Interdisciplinary Physics while *EPR-D* will open to Atoms, Molecules, Clusters, Optical Physics, Quantum Optics, Classical and Quantum Chaos. The field of Applied Sciences, Instrumentation and Materials will be covered by *EPR-E* distributed by Les Éditions de Physique in Paris.

There will be a joint editorial office in Orsay for *EPR-B* and *D* directed by two German editors and two French editors, acting as Editors-in-Chief. They will be helped by Associate Editors representing the various subfields and spread out over Europe and the rest of the world. The journal periodicity will be twice monthly for *EPR-B* and monthly for *EPR-D* and *E*.

Authors will be able to submit their manuscript through different channels, either through the offices of the Editors-in-Chief or directly to any of the Associate Editors. The journal will benefit from up-to-date electronic technologies for publications.

More information on *EPR* can be found on the servers of Les Éditions de Physique [www.ed-phys.fr](http://www.ed-phys.fr) and Springer-Verlag [link.springer.de](http://link.springer.de).