

Dear authors and readers,

In this festive International Year of the Periodic Table, the *Macedonian Journal of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering* is proud to mark the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its publication. Every anniversary is a time for a critical retrospective as well as to reflect on the future. The first issue was published under the title *Bulletin of Chemists and Technologists of Macedonia* in 1974. Professor Bojan Šoptrajanov, the first editor-in-chief, who was the first chemist later to be elected to the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Art, on behalf of the editorial board, pondered whether there was a need for a new journal considering the already large number of journals in the world. Furthermore, taking into account the level of science research in Macedonia there was a serious concern on the sustainability of a scientific journal in the area of chemistry and chemical engineering including the problem of its funding.

Four and a half decades later, many things have radically changed. The number of scientific journals and published papers have skyrocketed. Publishing, with few exceptions, has become a very profitable business controlled by big publishing houses, but also by predatory groups and individuals. Despite our persistent financial troubles, we never fell into the trap of such practices. Only for a short period, when we had no choice, we asked the authors to pay for the English editing and even then, we acted only as intermediaries to a professional editing service in England, which we still use. Fortunately, in the past few years the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, have been covering the publication costs. I must emphasize that all editors and members of the editorial boards, as well as the reviewers, have always worked on strictly voluntary basis. This is a good opportunity to thank them all for their selfless and dedicated work throughout the years.

Another leap in scientific publications came with the digital age that brought many changes including the phasing out the printed versions of journals. We created a simple web site in 2006 where the articles were posted online and the journal was included in the Directory of Open Access Journals. In 2007 it was renamed *Macedonian Journal of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering* – MJCCE. In 2012 the Open Journal System platform was adopted on a dedicated server and MJCCE became a truly electronic journal: the submissions including the metadata are online, the whole editorial process is also online and all editors, reviewers and authors can work individually on the submissions from any computer connected to the internet. Since 2016 all published articles receive digital object identifiers (DOIs). This, along with deposition in a repository, is a further safeguard diminishing the fears of perishable electronic data.

Since the inception of the journal, the research in the area of chemistry and chemical engineering in Macedonia, despite the lack of funding, especially in the past years, has made great advances both in depth and in diversity. As a matter of fact, chemists and chemical engineers have become leaders in the country by the number and the quality of scientific publications. MJCCE has greatly benefited from such development. The journal has an additional dimension especially for the young and aspiring local researchers because it sets the proper standards for carrying out and especially reporting results from their scientific research. It introduces them in the intricacies of the whole process of writing, submitting, reviewing, editing, proofreading etc. of scientific articles.

A major contributor to the sustainability of the journal has been the inclusion in the Science Citation Index Expanded and the first impact factor that was obtained in 2012. We are very proud of this achievement since many journals from well-established societies and larger scientific base and/or professionally engaged teams do not have an impact factor. Our general policy has been to encourage submission of quality publications without chasing the numerical value of this “all-important” parameter, which unfortunately seems to be a common practice.

The greatest challenge ahead of us, which is regrettably becoming more worrisome, is the lack of dependable, quality peer reviewers. This is probably the most important phase in the publication process, critically detecting the flaws, originality, inconsistencies and quality of the submitted manuscripts and an

overall improvement of the published article. The digital age seems to be bringing changes in this respect also. There is a concept of open reviews instead of the long established anonymous reviewers. Furthermore, with online platforms it is easy to have open comments page for every article, in other words the review process becomes a continuous process. Yet again, moderating such discussions would be an additional burden on the editors.

We can proudly say that in these four and a half decades we have persisted in keeping pace with the changing publication practices and at the same time improving the quality of the journal despite the trying times we have been going through. We are looking forward to the future and the challenges it will bring.

Zoran Zdravkovski

Editor-in-chief