

**Dear reader,**

you saw right, our 3R logo has taken the space of the Elsevier logo on our cover page, and the good old Spektrum publishing house logo from the nineties has returned to its place bottom centre. We were starting to wonder why the new publishing contract was taking so long. Now we know: we've been sold again. *ALTEX*, BioSpektrum and NeuroForum now belong to the renowned Springer publishing house. We cannot give you any more details yet, as our new publisher has not yet contacted us. But, of course, the owner of *ALTEX* is the society *ALTEX* Edition in Zurich. No matter which company is currently publishing us. From *ATLA* we know that publishing can also work without a publishing house. If the logos on the cover page change too often, we may have to think about that.

Together with this regular issue 3/2007 you are receiving a *Special Issue* of *ALTEX* that we were asked to publish for the 3R Research Foundation Switzerland. We are very proud to have been entrusted with this assignment. Twenty years of this renowned Swiss foundation's research funding, 14 million Swiss francs for alternative methods, are documented in this Supplement. Let us wish the 3R Research Foundation Switzerland another twenty successful years in promoting scientific animal protection.

The first main article in this issue is from the group of Vedani (University of Basel, Biographics Laboratory 3R). The manuscript documents what is currently possible with regard to the prediction of the toxic potential of drugs and chemicals. And that is already very impressive, even if in some paragraphs the thoughts might have hurried ahead into the future somewhat. But what would we be without visions?

One focus in the reporting in this issue is taken by the contributions that were offered in Chennai, India in January 2007. We were especially interested in discovering the opinions of our Indian colleagues. The country with the second highest population count on this earth is in a stormy forward motion. Good to know that the progress of people like Maneka Gandhi and Shiranee Pereira, who insist on the Indian traditions of protection and the inherent value of all creatures, is in good company. We were glad that the French company SkinEthik in India was so well represented with their skin models. The article is not supposed to be surreptitious advertising. We are glad to report in detail on all similar models, as long as they are validated or on their way there. Further manuscripts on the replacement of animal experiments for tolerance studies of cosmetics are welcome.

Many pages of this issue will play an important role in Linz. Thanks to the organisers, we have again succeeded in gathering (almost) all abstracts of the contributions to the Linz Congress. This year, those thanks will also be presented in the form of a cheque, as zet in Linz and the Academy for Animal Protection in Neubiberg will share this year's Doerenkamp-Zbinden Prize. A Medal of Honour will be awarded this year to Günter Verheugen, Vice-President of the European Commission, who will certainly still remember animal protection from his former activities in Germany.

In the news section we are especially pleased that the Chair for Animal Protection in Bern has now been advertised. It would really have been a devastating signal for scientific animal protection if the Vetsuisse faculty had refused this Chair.

The comment on the ESAC *Statement* in the news section is almost still put too mildly. Do we now need a European Agency for the Validation of Alternative Methods instead of ECVAM? A facility that is directly subject to the Parliament in Strasbourg? And thus freed from the hierarchy of the European Commission? We are confused: words and actions are far removed from each other with regard to alternative methods in the EU. And this at the start of REACH, and not long before the decisive date for important goals of the Cosmetics Directive entering into force. Only recently it was Europe goes alternative. By backtracking? Or how else shall that be accomplished with a dried up ECVAM budget, we ask. Perhaps the freshly selected carrier of the medal, Günter Verheugen, will be able to offer us some words of consolation.

Good news at the end. Horst Spielmann, former professor and director of ZEBET, will receive the *CAAT Recognition Award 2007* of the *Johns Hopkins School of Public Health* on occasion of the 6th World Congress on Alternatives in Tokyo. We are very happy about this further recognition of our editorial colleague of many years and offer him out heartfelt congratulations.

With warm regards and best wishes for the success of the Linz Congress, to which this issue is especially dedicated

Yours

Franz P. Gruber