

Alessandro Abbotto

I had a chat with Anne Nijs and Leana Travaglini, Editors of the European Journal of Organic Chemistry. We talked about the history of the journal, its relationship, and its collaboration with the SCI, one of EurJOC's owner and founding societies, and in particular the Organic Chemistry Division DCO. In addition, we discussed current trends in publishing, such as Open Access, and they gave me insights into the editor's daily life at EurJOC.

EurJOC is turning 25 this year! Can you tell us a bit about the history of the journal and how it changed over the years?

Anne: Yes, EurJOC is already 25! It was launched as a European initiative but has become a truly international journal over its two-and-half decades of existence. Nowadays more than a third of published papers in EurJOC are from researchers based in Asia, in addition to approximately 50 % of articles from Europe. Overall China, India, Germany, Italy, and France have topped the list as countries of origin for EurJOC articles over the last few years. EurJOC was initially known as an organic synthesis journal but it now has quite a broad scope and publishes articles also on mechanistic studies, (bio-)catalysis, bioorganic chemistry, supramolecular chemistry, and organic materials.

As I mentioned, at the start EurJOC was a result of a European effort. In fact, EurJOC was launched in 1998, together with its inorganic counterpart EurJIC, as a merger of several national European society journals, including the Italian society journal *Gazzetta Chimica Italiana*. At the time, these journals were published in their national languages, and the vision was to increase their impact and reach by creating high-quality European journals focusing on the two core disciplines in chemistry – organic and inorganic chemistry – both published in English. And looking at it now, this endeavor indeed turned out to be successful!

Does this mean that EurJOC is a society journal?

Anne: Correct, [Chemistry Europe](#) – an association of 16 European chemical societies, including the SCI – fully owns EurJOC and works together with Wiley-VCH as its publishing partner. Together, Chemistry Europe and Wiley-VCH now publish 20 journals, including also *Chemistry – A European Journal*, and the new title *ChemistryEurope*. This means that EurJOC closely collaborates with its owner societies and we both benefit from this collaboration, for example, owner societies receive royalty payments when researchers from their respective countries publish their work in EurJOC. These funds can then be invested in promoting society activities, conferences, sponsorships, prizes, etc.

Can you give us an example of collaboration?

Leana: Sure, we actually have a few! By now, we have teamed up with the French, Italian, Spanish, and German Organic Chemistry Divisions. The collaboration with the SCI-DCO is particularly fruitful. For instance, with Gianluca Farinola, EurJOC Board Member, we organized a special collection celebrating 40 years of the Ciamician Medal, while together with Valeria D'Auria, also EurJOC Board Member, for the first time we organized a collection highlighting the prize and medal winners of the Division, and we have received excellent work as well as fantastic covers! Special collections in honor of former board members Franco Cozzi and Cesare Gennari (also former Chair Person of EurJOC) were also particularly well received. But our collaboration is not limited to virtual collections. We regularly sponsor lectures and poster prizes, for example, at the national congress of the Division last year in Palermo and next September in Rome, and also at the C3-Day 2023 in Bologna, organized by EurJOC Board Member Marco Bandini.

How can early-career members of our Division actively collaborate with EurJOC?

Anne: Aligned with Chemistry Europe's mission to support its members at every stage of their careers, EurJOC strives to highlight emerging researchers. Over the last years, we have featured young talents through several collections, for example, our recent one entitled #NextGenOrgChem, which was guest edited by our Board Member Stefano Protti, showcases excellent work. However, we would also be happy to actively work together with emerging researchers on joint projects! For instance, they can act as Guest Editors for topical collections; a recent example is Luca Dell'Amico, a member of the EurJOC Board, who co-guest edited a successful collection on Dual Catalysis. Besides, this also presents a great opportunity to collaborate with researchers from other countries!

Another way of being actively involved in maintaining the high quality and standards of the journal is by acting as a reviewer, and of course by submitting good papers to EurJOC!

Leana: We would like to take this opportunity to encourage early-career researchers to reach out to us with proposals or ideas for collections as well as activities: we will be happy to discuss and bring them to life together! In the same manner, if early-career researchers would like to be more involved in the peer review process or have proposals for review articles, they can always get in touch with us.

You mentioned Board Members, what is exactly the role of the Editorial Board at EurJOC?

Anne: At the moment, our editorial board has a two-tier structure. We have a large and diverse international Advisory Board consisting of 58 members at various career stages, whose backgrounds reflect the topics that are covered in EurJOC. In contrast, the Editorial Board consists of 5 members who act as spokespersons for the Advisory Board. All of our board members have a dual ambassador and consultative role, they support us in defining the strategy of the journal and often act as court-of-appeal reviewers. As mentioned above, we try to involve them in journal activities, for example, as guest editors for special collections. We also take this opportunity to thank you, Alessandro, for your support of the journal as a member of the International Advisory Board for 9 years!

Can you tell us something about the editorial team? What happens behind the scenes at EurJOC?

Leana: We have an in-house editorial team: this is the first thing to know about EurJOC and most of the other titles belonging to Chemistry Europe. This means that EurJOC editors are professional editors, not active researchers, who are employed by the publisher and work full-time for the journal. We are not affiliated with any universities or funding bodies. At the moment, the team is quite international, with members in Weinheim, Berlin, Shanghai, and Delhi. The EurJOC editorial team is currently composed of Anne, as the editor, myself, as the Deputy Editor, and our Associate Editors Junting Chen, Lara Schulz, and Khushbu Kushwaha. We come from different academic backgrounds (see our [Contact page](#)), and this allows us to effectively manage the broad range of submissions to EurJOC and effectively handle the peer review process, which is our main task. As highly trained scientists – we strive to evaluate the scientific merit of each submission in an unbiased manner, of course, with the dedicated help of our reviewers! We also handle ethical cases with the support of the Wiley Integrity in Publishing Group.

Anne: Moreover, we are involved in many other activities, for instance, we define the journal strategy and liaise with the Editorial Board and society representatives. We oversee the production workflow, invite review articles, and organize virtual collections on various topics. Promoting our articles on social media and the journal by sponsoring conferences and lectures as well as giving seminars and workshops is also part of our job.

What are the requirements to become an editor?

Leana: First of all, a Ph.D. in chemistry or depending on the nature of the journal a relevant discipline is a must; a postdoc is not required but certainly a plus! A good command of English, diplomacy and flexibility, the ability to work in an international job environment, and attention to detail are necessary too. Editors need good communication skills during written interaction with authors, reviewers, and other

stakeholders, as well as in person as we also attend conferences, visit institutes, and give publishing workshops.

Where do you see the future of publishing and in particular EurJOC?

Anne: Open Science, and in this regard, Open Access publishing, has become increasingly important over the past decade. Many institutions and funders mandate that researchers publish open access. EurJOC offers authors a hybrid Open Access option, which means that they can choose to publish their article open access by paying a so-called article processing charge (APC), while the remaining content remains subscription based. Over the last five years, the number of Open Access articles in EurJOC has increased around 10 times, with about 30% of Open Access articles published in 2022. According to a recent study within Wiley, Open Access articles receive much more attention in media and are cited 50% more often and downloaded 3 times more frequently than subscription articles.

Leana: At the moment many [agreements between Wiley and various funding bodies](#) have been negotiated, which allow published articles to be freely available to the public with no additional cost to the author. For instance, in Italy [CRUI member institutions](#) have such a transitional agreement with Wiley! EurJOC is also a strong advocate of the growing trend to make primary data freely available (Open Data), and new community and publisher-based databanks are evolving to support this endeavor. Preprint servers, in particular ChemRxiv, have seen increased growth within the field of chemistry research. Wiley, among many other major publishers, allows the submission of preprint articles to EurJOC. EurJOC strives to play a pivotal role in the Open Science movement in the years to come!

How important is the impact factor when submitting to a journal?

Anne: The impact factor is one of many metrics describing the performance of a journal but can be an oversimplification, and it doesn't always correlate with the quality of articles. Over the past 25 years, EurJOC has become a synonym for high-quality research in organic chemistry. Its long history, good reputation, and rigorous peer review process are a guarantee of the quality of the work published in the journal. In a world that is changing so rapidly, and with the increasing number of journals available, EurJOC remains a reliable source for solid and high-quality organic chemistry. We would like to invite all researchers in organic chemistry, and in particular early-career scientists, to take this into account when choosing the best home for their work.

Leana: Moreover, we are moving away from journal-based metrics—specifically the Journal Impact Factor—as the sole measure of quality and impact. As part of these efforts, in May 2022, Wiley became a signatory of the [Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#), which is a worldwide initiative designed to improve the ways in which the outputs of scholarly research are evaluated.

As a publisher, Wiley now provides authors with a broader range of publicly [available journal and article metrics](#) that give them deeper insights into the impact of their work. These metrics are derived from important statistics like usage, re-use, media references, peer review performance, and geographic demographics, not just citations. Of course, publishers are not the only protagonists of this shift: funding agencies, governments, academic institutions, and researchers will play a major role as well.

How are you going to celebrate this silver anniversary?

Leana: We have planned several initiatives for the upcoming year. For instance, we are highlighting the work of our board members with a dedicated virtual collection, we have organized several social media activities, which can be followed on Twitter under the hashtag #EurJOC25, and we will sponsor conferences and lectures, including the CDCO in Rome, and the C3-Day 2023 in Bologna. We hope to see many of our authors and reviewers at conferences throughout the year to celebrate 25 years of EurJOC!

Thank you so much for your time Anne and Leana, we certainly also hope to see you at upcoming conferences in Italy!

Anne & Leana: Thank you, Alessandro, for your time and this opportunity to tell you and the DCO members a bit about EurJOC. We sincerely would like to thank all our Italian authors, reviewers, and Board Members for their continuous and precious support. And of course, we look forward to publishing and highlighting more exciting organic chemistry from Italy in EurJOC in the years to come!!



Dr. Anne Nijs
Editor-in-Chief



Dr. Leana Travaglini
Deputy Editor