



Dear reader,

only a few months after the 6th World Congress on Alternative Methods in Tokyo (you will find an informative report by Horst Spielmann in this issue), the authors Bottini, Amcoff and Hartung publish the third "Food for thought..." article, this time on globalisation, which invigorated the scene in Tokyo pleasantly. The idea of a formal validation of alternative methods has spread from Europe to the USA and Japan, recently also to Korea, and first developments are starting in China, India, Russia and Brazil. Eleven hypotheses explain why the time is now finally ripe for an *International Council of Validation Bodies*. The question Marie-Jeanne Schiffelers and her co-authors follow is no less topical: What actually happens after the validation? Why are methods that are officially validated not subsequently found in the OECD guidelines and in the pharmacopoeias? Why does it take so long? The implementation of validated methods is still a central problem in the area of alternative methods.

The major part of the December issue is made up of the traditional literature review, which takes up 36 pages. This was compiled by the new team and the *ALTEX* section editor Petra Mayr. To tap into current trends we will in future also report on literature that is available in the English language, preferably discussing it both in English and German. Our special "No. 4-subscribers" appreciated our last report greatly. Of the Linz presentations we have selected three contributions for this issue that are certainly not only interesting for life scientists: Andrew Knight again debates what clinical relevance many animal experiments really have, Roman Kolar and Irmela Ruhdel reappraise the work of the German animal ethics committees, and Martin Balluch and Eberhard Theuer report on a tough struggle for the chimpanzee Matthew (in Austrian: Hiasl), whose mother was shot in 1982 by poachers, and who was imported illegally to Austria to be "used" for research purposes. He was lucky to survive, but now faces being sold or put down, because he belongs to a game and fun park which has gone bankrupt. In Austria, animals were raised from the legal status of things a long time ago, or were they?

Further, you will find exciting conference reports in this issue: next to the report on Tokyo already mentioned above a report on the vibes at Linz together with abstracts that were received after the printing deadline for the 3/07 issue of *ALTEX*. We report on the anniversary meeting of the 3R Research Foundation in Zurich (3Rs = *better Science*) and introduce the topics of a very exciting international symposium in Giessen (Suffering and wellbeing of animals). We also inform you on the Berlin Retreat (Criteria and limits of ethically acceptable animal experiments), which resulted in the publication of position papers that are well worth reading.

When we presented our layouter with all the contributions for this issue, he raised the alarm: the December issue would have been almost 150 pages thick – that we cannot finance. So, sadly, we were forced to postpone some excellent contributions, which is against our aim of always being up to date. Two scientific main articles by Andrew Li will now only be published in 1/08 as will further position papers from the Berlin Retreat. We ask for your understanding. Most of the news section in this issue had to be cut out as did the index. Both can be found on our website www.altex.ch upon publication of this issue, and both shall also be printed in the 1/08 issue.

We hope that you, dear reader, have had a successful 2007 and we wish you all the best for 2008 and us all continued success in the replacement of animal experiments.

Sincerely, the *ALTEX* editorial team

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