

Twelve years of the *Estonian Journal of Earth Sciences*: a survey of achievements and their bearing on Earth sciences in Estonia

Scientific publication in its main part is nowadays a big business governed by specific rules and customs. The *Estonian Journal of Earth Sciences (EJES)*, published by the Estonian Academy of Sciences (EAS), belongs to a rather more traditional branch often called ‘society or university bulletins’, having a long history also in our country. For example, the first volume of the *Archiv für die Naturkunde Liv-, Ehst- und Kurlands* was published in 1854 by Dorpater Naturforscher Gesellschaft (= nowadays Eesti Loodusuurijate Selts) and its *Archiv* is still going on. The EAS has been publishing the *Proceedings of the Estonian Academy of Sciences* for more than 50 years, whereas *Geology* as a separate series of the *Proceedings* operated through 1978–2006. *Geology* was internationally peer-reviewed and indexed in several journals or databases and during these decades played an important role in making East Baltic geology more visible in the world. The EAS accepted in 2007 an initiative of the Estonian geological community and launched a new magazine, the *EJES*, in order to introduce modern publication trends and methods into our publishing practice. However, this was not a fully new beginning, but a renovation of a well-established unit and the continued volume numeration underlines the ties of succession between the two journals. Today, twelve years later and in the year of the centennial of the Republic of Estonia, it is right time to look back on what we have achieved during this period.

The Editor’s preface to the first issue of the *EJES* vol. 56, 2007 marks several goals of the newborn journal. Let us repeat some of them here. For example, with the change of the journal’s name our geological community wishes to emphasize that we support an increasing trend in Earth sciences, which can be formulated as the strengthening of the interaction and complexity of disciplines known as Earth system sciences. We also stress that the evolution of Earth systems, especially those highlighted by the science programme of the International Year of Planet Earth and of the IGCP, result from the global and regional components of interacting processes. Both these aspects of the Earth sciences are also the topic of our journal. Proceeding from such a general policy, the *EJES* is publishing papers covering the whole field of Earth sciences, including, besides different geological *sensu lato* disciplines, also

geography and oceanography having certain connection with our part of the world, North Europe and the Baltic area in particular. As shown by the statistics presented below, we have made some success in these directions.

Other items needing continuous attention are the scientific level of the publications and visibility of the *EJES*. I thank well-known scientists from different countries, including Estonia, for their consent to become members of the Editorial Board (see the list inside the front cover) and more than 500 reviewers, helping the journal reach high standards in Earth science publishing. In order to make our editing and international reviewing work more efficient and competent, we introduced also four posts of associate editors for main discipline groups. In co-operation with the editor-in-chief and executive editor, they are supervising the entire manuscript editing procedure. The most practical changes introduced in the first issue are the increased format (A4) and the two-column layout, providing more space for text and greater flexibility in accommodating the tables and illustrations. We are convinced that all these and some other technical details, including open electronic access policy (the *EJES* officially joined the Open Access system on 4 September 2007), make the journal a reliable medium for Earth science publishing. This conclusion is supported by data of the Web of Science where our impact factor raised quickly from 0.080 in 2008 to 1.321 in 2011. Since 2010 our five-year impact factor has been variable but constantly above 1, which is a rather solid result among similar regional or society journals.

Looking at the *EJES* through twelve years, we see twelve volumes with four issues every year, it means altogether 48 issues and 3465 pages containing 316 writings (including besides ordinary papers 16 short notes and 13 editorials/prefaces). Among 48 published issues there are nine special issues devoted to some specific topic. These were additionally financed by an interested party and therefore their page numbers are bigger than planned (an ordinary issue has 61–69 pages, a special one 112–148 pages). The average length of papers is twelve pages (in some special issues more limited – nine pages), of short notes four to five pages.

As mentioned above, the topical profile of the journal is Earth sciences *sensu lato*, including oceanography,



A selection of front covers; on the right vol. 67 devoted to the centennial of the Republic of Estonia. Photo by G. Baranov.

meteorology, pedology and some ecology (palaeoecology), with regional concentration on the Baltic area and the closest neighbours. The following statistical data show this aspect and some other details clearly. We counted the number of papers (short notes included) in seven fields: (A) geology in general (incl. geophysics and geochemistry), (B) palaeontology and stratigraphy, (C) Quaternary geology, (D) economic geology (incl. hydrogeology), (E) oceanology and meteorology, (F) soil science, (G) ecology. Expectedly, A + B form more than 50% and together with C two thirds of the contents. Fields D and E both cover slightly more than 10% and F and G remain below the 5% limit. The same pattern is clearly seen from the distribution of papers by study areas – Estonia (above 1/3) together with Baltoscandia (incl. Belarus and Poland) forms 2/3 of the contents, while Russia, wider Europe and other continents give 10% or a bit more each. Papers from other continents most often appeared in topical special issues of the *EJES*, published as follows: in 2008, issue 2 and partly issue 3 – ‘Georesources and public policy’; in 2009, issue 1 – ‘The Seventh Baltic Stratigraphical Conference’ and issue 4 – ‘The International Year of Planet Earth, 2007–2009’ (guest editor A. Soesoo); in 2010, issue

2 – ‘The INQUA Peribaltic Working Group Symposium’ (the Weichselian glaciation, guest editor V. Kalm); in 2012, issue 4 – ‘The 65th anniversary of the Institute of Geology at Tallinn University of Technology’; in 2013, issue 1 – ‘The Seventh Workshop on Baltic Sea Ice Climate, Tallinn 2011’ (guest editor A. Erm); in 2014, issue 4 and 2015, issue 1 – ‘IGCP 591 The Early to Middle Palaeozoic Revolution’ (guest editors K. Histon and Ž. Žigaitė), and the last one in 2018, issue 1, entitled ‘Devonian and its Fossil World’, in memory of a well-known Estonian palaeontologist and geologist Elga Mark-Kurik. This list of special issues testifies that our journal has been in good contact with developments in local/regional geosciences as well as with those on global scale. We surely wish to continue this policy. Another ‘global’ tendency is well demonstrated by the authorship statistics of the *EJES* – the most popular authorship model is the so-called et al. model with three or more authors per paper. Such papers made up 55%, those with two authors 30% and single-authored papers only 15%. Sometimes long lists of authors raise doubts about objectivity, but in general we see here that the ‘et al. model’ is best fitting with the dominant cooperation style of contemporary science.

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