

EDITORIAL

The *Estonian Journal of Earth Sciences* turns 70

The *Estonian Journal of Earth Sciences*, aka *EJES*, has existed under this name and its unique ISSN identifier since 2007. However, the journal did not come from scratch, but represents an evolutionary step in scientific publishing in geosciences under the Estonian Academy of Sciences that started in 1952, making the current volume already 70th in a row.

The first parent journal of the *EJES* – the *Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian SSR* (official name *Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia Toimetised* / *Известия Академии наук Эстонской ССР*) was published between 1952 and 1955. It covered a wide range of research fields, including geology as part of chemical and technical sciences. The very first geology-related paper in the journal was the one by Dilaktorski (1952), discussing aspects of thermal analysis methodology of different rocks and minerals. When the overarching *Proceedings* was split into several individual journals in 1956, geological topics were included in the Physical-Mathematical Series (entitled *Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia Toimetised, Tehniliste ja Füüsikalis-matemaatiliste teaduste seeria* / *Известия Академии наук Эстонской ССР. Серия технических и физико-математических наук*). During the 1950s, the number of geological papers was rather low, but an increase started in the early 1960s and notably in 1967, when the Chemistry–Geology Series of the *Proceedings* was established (*Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia Toimetised, Keemia, Geoloogia* / *Известия Академии наук Эстонской ССР. Химия. Геология*). Since then, on average 20–30 geology articles have been published yearly in Estonia.

In 1978, the Chemistry–Geology Series was divided into two and a separate, geology-focused journal under the name *Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia Toimetised, Geoloogia* / *Известия Академии наук Эстонской ССР. Геология* was formed. The official English translation of the title, *Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian SSR, Geology*, appeared on the front cover in 1984, in connection with the International Geological Congress that was partly organized in Estonia. In 1990 the ‘SSR’ part was omitted from the name and starting from 1995, the journal is known by the English title only: *Proceedings of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, Geology*, the direct predecessor journal of the *EJES*.

The switch to the new name *Estonian Journal of Earth Sciences* in 2007, which brought a wider thematic scope and a larger format, was made in response to authors’ and

readers’ needs. The change was also following the new trends in science publishing. Importantly, the updated journal was included in additional indexing services and all individual papers started to receive DOI identifiers for cross-referencing and persistent online accessibility. The *EJES* was one of the first journals in Estonia that joined the Directory of Open Access Journals (<https://doaj.org>) and it continues to be freely accessible under the CC BY free content licence, which allows unrestricted use of articles taken that they are properly cited. The issues of the predecessor journals are now also available online through library archives, notably ETERA (<https://www.etera.ee>).

During the 70 years of publication history, altogether well over a thousand geoscience-related papers have been published in the *EJES* and its parent journals. Many of these continue to be useful references today, containing valuable original research data as well as ideas. This is clearly shown by citations tracked by Google Scholar. For instance, among papers published in the *EJES* between 2007 and 2020, some have received more than 100 citations to date (e.g., Kaljo et al. 2008), and many are being cited yearly. The impact factor of the *EJES* has been varying around 1, with the highest value of 1.3, which is reasonably good for a regional journal. It is also noteworthy that several papers published in the *EJES* have been referred to in top-level scientific journals including *Science* and *Nature*.

The thematic trends of papers published in the *EJES* were reviewed recently by Kaljo (2018). Although the scope of the journal is Earth sciences *sensu lato*, more than 2/3 of papers are devoted to different aspects of geology, whereas oceanography, climatology, soil science etc. account for a relatively small share. As the *EJES* is a regional journal published by the Estonian Academy of Sciences and supported by Estonian universities, it is not surprising that Estonian scientists predominate among its authors; however, ca 55% of 359 papers published since 2007 include at least one foreign author and 35% of papers are written entirely by foreign authors. This is a notable difference from earlier volumes and shows a broad international recognition of the *EJES*.

At the 70th volume milestone it is appropriate to ask what lies ahead for the *EJES*. Indeed, during the last two decades, a lot has already changed in science publishing. The importance of printed journals has decreased significantly and most authors and readers expect enhanced functionality of online publishing platforms and



Front covers of the *Estonian Journal of Earth Sciences* and its predecessor journals that have been published since 1952.

e-services instead. The speed of publishing and early availability of research results have turned key issues for many disciplines, and geosciences are not an exception. Therefore, publishing research articles in regular journal issues might soon become obsolete. Perhaps the role of individual journals will also decrease, in favour of archives of individual research papers and data networks. A related key change in science publishing has been the spread of Open Access philosophy, which aims to make research articles and data created using public funding freely available to everyone. However, along with free access for the readers, the economic model of Open Access journals often includes publication fees for the authors. Open Access has increased the visibility and accessibility of the *EJES*, but it remains to be seen if and how the recently adopted article processing charges influence the number and quality of submissions.

In summary, there is no doubt that various regional aspects remain important for geosciences and a regional journal – or perhaps some new type of research publishing platform – will be needed in the future to report on mineral resources, environmental issues, regional stratigraphy, etc.

Most importantly it has been, and continues to be, up to our authors and their manuscripts that ensure the continuity of high-quality geoscience publishing in Estonia.

References

- Dilaktorski, N. 1952. Termilise analüüsi meetodite rakendamise küsimusi [Aspects of the application of thermal analysis methods]. *Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia Toimetised*, **1**, 63–73 [in Estonian].
- Kaljo, D. 2018. Twelve years of the *Estonian Journal of Earth Sciences*: a survey of achievements and their bearing on Earth sciences in Estonia. *Estonian Journal of Earth Sciences*, **67**, 223–225.
- Kaljo, D., Hints, L., Männik, P. & Nõlvak, J. 2008. The succession of Hirnantian events based on data from Baltica: brachiopods, chitinozoans, conodonts, and carbon isotopes. *Estonian Journal of Earth Sciences*, **57**, 197–218.

Olle Hints
Editor-in-Chief