



## EDITORIAL

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## Editorial

In this Editorial I want to present in more details to the Physics Community two of our programs: “Perspectives” and “Focus Issues”.

“Perspectives” have become important in our Editorial strategy, to the point of being a distinctive feature of the Journal. Perspectives are essentially invited short reviews, with the same length as our regular Letters. The scope is quite flexible and may cover a recent line of work by an author or group, or entire fields, possibly including discussions on open questions and commentaries. In our hectic times, Perspectives may play a pivotal role as a paused reflection on the directions that research could or should go towards.

*EPL* started the Perspectives program in 2014 and since then we have published more than a hundred Perspective papers, with the number increasing every year. In the last four years, we published 5 Perspectives in 2018, 12 in 2019, 23 in 2020, and 35 in 2021. We aim to continue growing the program.

The Deputy Editors devote much of their efforts to commissioning Perspectives, and indeed my previous period as a Deputy Editor gave me a broad experience on authors queries about them. First of all, the author should be aware that the 7-page limit is strict. Why so? There is a natural tendency to ask for more space but *EPL* is after all a Letters Journal. Letters are not better or worse than regular papers, they are just different, each format being appropriate for different things. A frequent reaction to our page limit is that “Seven pages are not enough for a review”. Well, it all depends. Do not try a Perspective if you want an encyclopedic, comprehensive account. In fact, after all the Perspectives published by *EPL*, it is quite clear that this is a valid and useful format for many fields and purposes, well appreciated by authors and readers.

In several professional facets (as a report and application writer, lecturer, or advisor of someone preparing a talk) I had to deal often with complaints by students, young researchers or even senior colleagues that “it is not possible to tell all I want to tell in X minutes, or in Y pages”. My simple and universal answer is “It is!”. We have first to believe that it is possible to make it happen. Let me cite here the well-known words by Hilbert “Wir müssen wissen, wir werden wissen” (—we must know, we will know— one of the best pieces of advice that can be given to a scientist). Paraphrasing the great master we could say here that “We must shorten, and we will shorten”. There is much beauty in extracting the essential, it serves in particular to understand better. Transmitting something in a short time or in a small number pages in a comprehensible manner means that we must have assimilated very well whatever we are telling, as well as the context, the history, the relations to the outer world, and the key aspects *vs.* the accessory. This intellectual effort pays off for the writer and for the reader.

As for the tone and style, it remains a personal choice, but we encourage the authors to produce a pleasant, easy to read article, and to write for a broader audience than the strict specialists, at least in the introduction and discussion. This applies generically to all Letters, but it is even more advisable in Perspectives, as they should aim at becoming referential nodes in the science web.

Perspectives are proposed to potential authors by the Deputy Editors or the Editor-in-Chief, who also consider suggestions from members of the Editorial Board. Much care is exercised in keeping a balanced distribution of topics and in writing meaningful invitations. For the authors, the benefits of writing a Perspective for *EPL* include publication in free access without author charges, ensuring that their Perspective is widely disseminated.

The other publishing scheme I want to address is the Focus Issues (FI) program. Focus Issues were launched by *EPL* in 2017 [1], and have appeared at an approximate rate of one per year. They are collections of about ten or more articles on a topic, invited by the FI Editor(s), which always includes a member of the Editorial Board. Commissioning Special Issues devoted to specific topics has become common practice in modern scientific journal publishing, and authors are quite used to this type of publication. Going forward, we will launch collections of papers on emerging topics or topics of interest for a broad community. A FI may, although not necessarily, take research networks or conferences as a starting point, but a wider scope is possible and actually recommended, as non-participants may also have important things to say on the chosen topic. It should be noted that *EPL* does not publish “Proceedings” of Conferences and that the quality standards for articles in Focus Issues are exactly the same as for regular research letters.

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Our EPL FI have some differentiating characteristics with respect to other journals: the Letter format, to start with, and also the possibility to combine Perspectives as well as Letters in Focus Issues. One or two Perspectives in a Focus Issue can be the cornerstone of the Issue by providing an overview of the topic. FIs can even be made entirely of Perspectives. Proposals for new FI are welcome and will be studied by the Deputy Editors and the Editor-in-Chief. They should include the topic and motivation in publishable style, see examples in <https://iopscience.iop.org/journal/0295-5075/page/Focus%20Issues>, as well as a list of potential authors. All letters in the FI benefit from free access without author charges.

*J. Gonzalo Muga*  
Editor-in-Chief

## REFERENCES

- [1] BENEDEK G. and WATT G., *EPL*, **118** (2017) 60000.