

From the Chief Editor

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With these lines, I wish to introduce myself to all readers of *FEMS Microbiology Reviews*. The Chief Editor, Ramón Díaz-Orejas, has decided to step down after publication of the January 2009 issue and, as his successor, I now have the pleasure of joining the

successful team that has consistently managed to publish this widely appreciated journal. First of all, I would like to thank Ramón for the excellent services that he has provided to *FEMS Microbiology Reviews* since 2001, first as an Editor and then as a Chief Editor. His guidance, dedication and hard work have been truly outstanding. I look forward to working with the Editors, the Editorial staff at the FEMS Central Office in Delft and the Wiley-Blackwell publishing team in Oxford. I am confident that together, we will bring you many interesting and authoritative reviews over the coming years.

Fortunately, there is no shortage of exciting topics in microbiology at present. Which other biological science has so many organisms still to discover and characterize? I am thinking of the tremendous numbers of microorganisms that so far have been detected only by molecular tools in various habitats, but which remain to be cultivated and studied in the laboratory. Thanks to nanotechnological approaches that are being developed, we are beginning to learn how to study the phenotypes and genotypes of single cells, without having to go through lengthy and often unfruitful procedures of single-colony isolation. I am also convinced that major discoveries and advances are ahead of us in numerous other facets of fundamental and applied microbiology.

This brings me to an important point and one of my priorities as a Chief Editor. While many of our reviews are commissioned by the Editors, there is an alternative possibility that I would recommend: proposals for reviews may be sent to the Chief Editor or to an Editor who is an expert in the field. Such proposals should contain an outline (aim, scope and relevance) of the intended review and explain why the particular topic would be timely. Discussion of a review project with the Editors is crucial and may well avoid the kind of disappointment that some authors have experienced after submitting a finished manuscript without prior consultation. The submission procedures of *FEMS Microbiology Reviews* explain all of the details that a proposal should include. As a prospective contributor to *FEMS Microbiology Reviews* please remember that reviews should not only be of high scientific quality, but also be pleasant to read by specialists as well as nonspecialists. In the same vein, the use of high-standard colour figures, diagrams or photographs is encouraged. Colour illustrations will be printed free of charge at the Editor's discretion.

The forthcoming FEMS Congress 2009 in Gothenburg (see <http://www2.kenes.com/fems-microbiology/Pages/Home.aspx>) will provide a wonderful opportunity to find out about recent developments in microbiology. I look forward to seeing you there.

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