With volume 8, the *European Spine Journal* enters a new era. The journal has become the official publication of the Spine Society of Europe, and a formal contract was signed in December 1998 between the SSE and Springer-Verlag. The journal still remains affiliated to the European Section of the Cervical Spine Research Society and the Gesellschaft für Wirbelsäulenchirurgie. Negotiations are currently being undertaken with both SILACo and the Brazilian Spine Society. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Springer-Verlag team for the quality of their work and for their continuous stimulating support. Special thanks are also due to Mrs. Irene Zintel, who, as secretary to the journal, remains the cornerstone of this publication.

The Editorial Board structure has been altered, and the full board (Editors, Editorial Board and Advisory Board) will meet annually on the occasion of the EuroSpine meetings. In addition, the Editors and the

Editorial Board will hold a working session at another time in the year. Whereas the general philosophy of the journal remains unchanged, some new avenues will be pursued. Although regular review articles were foreseen right from the beginning, they were held back for the benefit of abundant original articles. To foster, also the teaching and educational value of the journal, we will start as soon as possible with a review article in each issue. Nevertheless, the emphasis will remain on original clinical and basic science papers with the occasional case reports. As in the past, all manuscripts will be reviewed blindly by at least three editorial board members. Reviewers will be encouraged to write short comments putting selected papers into perspective. Occasionally, single topic-related issues will be published, if financial backing can be raised. With the foundation of the SSE, several annual awards are being introduced. A Clinical Science Award of 10.000

Euros is offered by AcroMed and a Basic Science Award of 10.000 Euros is offered by SulzerMedica. Both winning papers will be published in the *European Spine Journal*. The practical details concerning these awards are to be found in the SSE section of this issue. Over the years, the *European Spine Journal* has been able to maintain high standards. We are confident that we will all together, writers, reviewers and readers be able to continue participating actively in the further growth of this journal.

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