



Letter from the Presiding Council and the CEO of the German Chemical Society (GDCh)

The reactions to the Essay by Tomáš Hudlický in *Angewandte Chemie – International Edition* show that it has upset and in many cases hurt members of our international chemical community. This is fully understandable and saddens us very much. “Not only the Advisory Board, but also the Presiding Council on behalf of the Board of Directors of the GDCh, owner of *Angewandte Chemie*, distances itself from the statements made in the Hudlicky article and we sincerely apologize to those who feel hurt by the article,” says Peter R. Schreiner, President of the German Chemical Society (GDCh). “We are fully committed to the principles of diversity and we are convinced that diversity not only enriches our society but also stimulates our research and thus leads to better results.”

As a first immediate response, the article was removed from the Wiley Online Library and the Editor-in-Chief apologized for having published it at all. In the context of the full investigation that was initiated immediately, two editors have been suspended from their positions. The two international referees who favorably reviewed the essay will no longer serve for the journal’s peer review process.

The first results of the investigation show that the formal peer review process was technically conducted in a proper way, but nevertheless failed. “We will intensively discuss, how future peer review processes should be carried out for articles that are not purely scientific but also contain personal views of the author(s). As a journal of a democratic organization, we are committed to freedom of speech and *Angewandte Chemie* should continue to be a journal in which different opinions have their place and are discussed respectfully”, says Wolfram Koch, CEO of GDCh. “However, it must not and will not happen again that statements that are diametrically opposed to our values are published. The peer review processes will be adapted accordingly.”

We are in close contact with the Editorial Board as well as with the International Advisory Board (IAB) of the journal in order to clarify these issues together and develop a constructive solution for the measures to be implemented. All members of the IAB have been contacted and asked to assist in the investigation of this case and many of them offered their support in this time where it is needed most. In addition, all those who will be involved – the Editorial Board and the International Advisory Board, the editorial staff of *Angewandte Chemie* and the GDCh – want to use this painful incident to implement activities towards diversity and equal opportunities more resolutely than before in full agreement with GDCh’s mission statement of diversity

https://en.gdch.de/fileadmin/downloads/Service_und_Informationen/Presse_Oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/PDF/2020/Mission_statement_Equal_opportunities.pdf. “There is no doubt that the idea of equal opportunities is overwhelmingly approved in the community of the approximately 31000 members of the GDCh”, says Stefanie Dehnen, Vice President of GDCh. “And we are convinced of the extraordinary scientific quality of our flagship journal *Angewandte Chemie*. We are confident that this incident, however painful it is at the moment, will enhance communication, foster diversity, reduce biases and thus will lead to a better understanding within the chemical community.”