With the successful launch in the new format, the *Eastern Mediterranean health journal* (EMHJ) has entered its sixteenth year! The Journal went through many vicissitudes before acquiring its present polished look and achieving monthly publication. The response to the new format from the Regional and worldwide community of authors, reviewers, readers and librarians has been remarkable. We acknowledge with gratitude the support of the new Editorial Board members.

We are hopeful that this new team of guardians, under new leadership, will take the Journal to new heights in scientific content, variety of contributions and style and quality of publication. Our thanks are also due to the contributors of the research and policy articles to the Journal and to our esteemed reviewers who have continued to be, the driving force behind the continued improvement in quality. And last but not least, we would like to thank all our readers, who have made it possible for us to maintain publication since the inception of the EMHJ in 1995.

EMHJ is looking at exploring greater utilization of web technology and tools, for example pre-print publication and online only publication, and will keep readers and authors informed about these editions [electronic versions of the Journal]. In the past few years, EMHJ has received many more submissions than it can publish. With our new policy, aimed at improving quality and including new sections, the ultimate goal is to publish no more than 10–12 original research articles each month. Therefore, in the near future we may decide to publish some articles online only. Authors will be made aware of this policy before it is initiated and before they submit articles. We will announce the criteria for online only publishing in future issues of the Journal.

The majority of papers published so far in the EMHJ have needed extensive editing, both technical and language editing, and each paper takes considerable time to complete the process, involving considerable cost. This illustrates the need to train researchers in writing papers (and also in conducting research) but in addition, the need for the Journal to apply more stringent acceptance policies. In light of this, EMHJ will shortly announce training programmes on “Writing a journal article and getting it published” and “Peer review of biomedical research papers” in collaboration with the Research Policy and Cooperation (RPC) and Editorial, Graphics & Publishing Support (E&G) units of the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean.